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AND CHARLES THE BOLD

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Louis VII.

LOUIS XI

AND CHARLES THE BOLD

BY

LIEUT.-COLONEL ANDREW C. P. HAGGARD, D.S.O.

AUTHOR OF "SIDELIGHTS ON THE COURT OF FRANCE," "THE AMOURS OF HENRI DE
NAVARRE," "THE FRANCE OF JOAN OF ARC," "THE ROMANCE OF BAYARD"
ETC. ETC.

*WITH A PHOTOGRAPHURE FRONTISPIECE, FOURTEEN,
OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS IN HALF-TONE, AND A MAP*

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THE FOLLOWING PAGES
ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO MY
DEAR BROTHER RIDER
AS AN
EXPRESSION OF MY ADMIRATION OF
HIS LIFE-WORK AND CAREER

ANDREW C. P. HAGGARD.

CAMP HAGGARD,
VANCOUVER ISLAND,
1913.

FOREWORD

IN a previous work, "Two Great Rivals," it was the Author's task to depict the condition of European unrest resulting from the constant jealousies of François I. and the great Emperor Charles V., while in the present book are set forth the incidents which led up to the rivalry of those potentates.

Throughout several centuries of the Middle Ages France was almost as much English as French. There was a constant coming and going of Monarchs from France to England and vice versa—William the Norman, Eleanor, heiress of Aquitaine, the Plantagenets, Edward III. and Henry V., being examples of this see-saw movement between the countries of Princes with French blood in their veins and French rights.

In the great Duchy of Aquitaine Edward the Black Prince was regarded by the people as their lawful ruler, while, nearly a hundred years after his death, the final struggle between France and England was fought out chiefly by the people of Bordeaux and the surrounding country, who were determined to remain English.

During this period France was a Catholic and feudal country with a Monarch at its head, but can hardly have been called French. Such was the power of the great feudal dependencies of the Crown that in every direction these amounted to independent Sovereignties of greater or lesser extent.

In "The France of Joan of Arc," with its descriptions of the wars of the Armagnacs and the Burgundians, the Author took pains to show how that great feudal dependency, Burgundy, even sided against the French Monarch, by forming an alliance with England. The Duchy of Brittany and the smaller Principalities and Counties of the south were likewise frequently to be seen in arms on the side of the English invader.

It was only after the meteoric appearance of Joan of Arc had done so much to weaken the English power that Charles VII., by the formation of a regular army, commenced the establishment of the supremacy of the central authority over the lesser semi-independent rulers, that France at length commenced to become France, as we understand the word to-day.

To prevent the further consolidation of the country, there yet remained, however, the personal antagonism of the rulers of France and, their cousins and nominal vassals, the rulers of Burgundy and the Low Countries.

This had become the more bitter owing to the murder by Charles VII., when Dauphin, of the Duc

Jean Sans Peur. The rivalry between, Jean's son, Duc Philippe le Bon, and Charles VII., became still more accentuated when the Burgundian boldly gave asylum to the future Louis XI., flying from his father's vengeance.

The following pages will show, in turn, the base ingratitude of Louis XI. to the House of Burgundy, which had so befriended him when a rebel to his father's authority. They make clear the hatred and constant rivalry between the ever-scheming French King and his cousin Charles le Téméraire (the Bold), and relate how, by the malignant plotting of Louis, he caused his rival's death at the hands of the Swiss at Nancy.

The despicable manner in which Louis XI. subsequently despoiled his fair godchild Marie of Burgundy of all her French possessions is also set forth. Further, how fate played into the astute King's hands in all directions, with the result that it only remained for his son Charles VIII. to marry Anne, the heiress of Brittany, to overcome all remaining feudal opposition, and to form of France a consolidated Kingdom, with boundaries much as they exist to-day.

ANDREW C. P. HAGGARD.

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Louis XI. and Charles the Bold

CHAPTER I

The Women who Influenced Charles VII

A FEW years after the burning, with the sanction of Holy Mother Church, of Joan of Arc at Rouen, the ungrateful Charles VII., who had never stirred a little finger to help her, began to show himself a man. While the English who had been so weakened owing to Joan's initiative were still masters of Paris, Normandy, and Guyenne, their chances of recovering the Sovereignty of France had been greatly diminished owing to the reconciliation which took place between the two great parties of Armagnac (or Orléans) and Burgundy in the year 1435.

In that year France was in the interesting situation of a Kingdom over which two Kings, the young English Henry VI. and his uncle, Charles VII., were reigning at the same time. While the former still held Paris, by his uncle John, Duke of Bedford, the Regent, Charles de Valois, remained merely that which he had been termed in derision, the King of Bourges, a town a hundred and twenty miles to the south of the capital.

In spite of the fact that Joan of Arc had so boldly

asserted the legitimacy of Charles, owing to the well-known immoralities of his mother, Isabeau of Bavaria, there were still many in France who considered that the young Henry, the grandson of Charles VI. of France, had the better right to the throne. Moreover, the Treaty of Troyes, signed in 1420 by his grandfather, Charles VI., with his father, Henry V. of England, distinctly established the young Henry's right to the Crown.

The country was, however, wearied to death of the eternal wars, both between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians and the Armagnacs and the English, the latter being aided by the immense power of the Dukes of Burgundy. Thus, at Arras, in 1435, there was to be seen assembled a collection of many Ambassadors and Princes, while it was sought to accord the claims of the two rival Kings to the French Crown.

A division between the claimants might then well have been arranged, had it not been for the arrogance of the English, who wished to retain the whole of France, while merely according to Charles de Valois a small pension, levied on the province of Languedoc, on condition that he did not disturb Henry VI. "in his Kingdom of France."

The English having left the conference at Arras in disgust, the great Duc Philippe le Bon de Bourgogne was still unwilling to give up their alliance, when the mercantile jealousy of the English of his Flemish subjects determined him to do so. The death of the Duke of Bedford just at that time settled the matter, as the sacred nature of treaties made with him personally by Burgundy were not considered as binding when he was dead.

A peace was accordingly made at Arras between Philip of Burgundy and Charles VII., who, while Dauphin of France, had in the year 1418 murdered Philip's father, the Duc Jean Sans Peur at the Bridge of Montereau. By the Treaty of Arras, while the Duc de Bourgogne pardoned Charles for his father's assassination, he practically established himself as a King, one who would not yield homage for his French possessions, which included various important cities on the Somme and a considerable part of Picardy and Artois.

In the year following this great reconciliation the English were obliged to evacuate Paris, and Charles, having gained possession of the capital, was enabled to look upon himself as the actual ruler of the Kingdom, even though considerable portions of it were still occupied by foreign armies.

He now began to assert himself, being greatly strengthened by his alliance with the Duke of Burgundy, the ruler not merely of the Duchy of that name and the County called Franche Comté, but of all Flanders and Holland. His troubles were great, by no means the least of them being the problem how to reward the services of the nobles who had proved faithful to himself. This Charles accomplished by depriving the Church of its liberties. By a Pragmatic Sanction, declared at Bourges, the King adopted the decrees of the Ecclesiastical Council of Bâle, and recognised the rights of the nobles to become the patrons of the Church and to present to benefices. Thus were the Seigneurs enabled to fill the best offices of the Church with their own nominees, and to replenish their empty pockets by the transaction. The

Bishops thus being named by the great nobles, who frequently appointed juvenile members of their own families, the Church in France became neither Papal nor Royal, but simply a seigneurial institution.

This step was one to gain many who had previously been wavering between the English and the French over to Charles VII., among them being those great independent captains, who were no better than brigands, who commanded the Free Companies and went by the name of *écorcheurs*, or flayers. Among these were many well-known soldiers, such as the Gascon La Hire, the irreligious ruffian who had been tamed by Joan of Arc, Chabannes, the Bastard of Bourbon, and the Bastard of Vaurus.

Having become strengthened, Charles soon made use of the Constable of France, Arthur, Comte de Richemont, who was brother of the independent Duke of Brittany, to restore something like order to a distracted land. Richemont was a fearless and blood-thirsty warrior who detested the *écorcheurs*, who still committed endless acts of brigandage about the Kingdom, and his methods of reducing these to obedience included wholesale drownings and executions.

Since, however, these very *écorcheurs* were the captains whom Charles was obliged to employ in his continued wars against the English, it was not possible at once to wipe them out wholesale; and meanwhile France went on exterminating herself. It mattered little whether or no the English retired, the work of devastation continued from one end of the land to the other. While, in the country, houses were pillaged and burned down by the pitiless robbers, the big cities were thronged with a famine-stricken

population which had fled from the land, which remained untilled.

Thus, when the English retired from Paris to Normandy they left behind them a city which soon became the breeding-place of plague and other horrible diseases, where the wolves entered by night, prowled about in search of carrion, and even attacked and devoured people in the streets.

Charles VII., seeing the condition of affairs, did not remain long in the capital, where he was unable to ameliorate matters, but, leaving it to its fate, once more became merely the "Roi de Bourges."

Poor-spirited as he had hitherto shown himself, he for a time utterly failed to see how he could cope with such unscrupulous rascals as his captains. He proved himself, for instance, unable to control one of the most capable, La Hire. This Gascon adventurer, regardless of the laws of hospitality, took prisoner a gentleman who had given him shelter, and, despite the prayers of the King, would not let him go until he had beggared himself in order to pay the enormous ransom upon which La Hire insisted as the price of his liberty.

Fortunately for France, while matters were in this condition Charles, who has well been termed "le bien servi," became the possessor of two men whose services were to prove invaluable. These, not nobles, as were the usual advisers of Kings in those days, were both drawn from the middle classes. One of them, a Levant merchant named Jacques Cœur, was his silversmith at Bourges; the other, Jean Bureau, was a lawyer, a magistrate, a man of the pen. Of the former Charles before long made the paymaster

of his armies, while the latter he transformed into the commandant-general of his artillery, of which the lawyer soon made a formidable arm.

While the nobles were grumbling at finding themselves subjected to the whims and wishes of two mere *roturiers*, it was doubtless by the advice of these plebeians that, in November 1439, Charles took the firm resolve of reforming the army. He pretended that it was by the prayer of the assembled States of Orléans that he issued his famous "Ordonnance," which embodied the great reform by which he astonished the nobles and soon brought the leaders of the brigand *écorcheurs* to their bearings. Just before bringing out his famous measure Charles had twice distinguished himself in the field. Once it was at the storming of Montereau, which place he entered by the breach at the head of his men, and once at Meaux, which he captured chiefly owing to the able use which the lawyer Bureau made of the artillery under his command.

By the Ordonnance issued by Charles, after thus for the first time he had shown that he could behave like a man before the enemy, he declared that, in future, the captains were to be nominated by the King alone. There were to be no more free companies, the Barons were to levy no more wars on their own account; the Seigneurs no longer to invade friendly or hostile States or provinces under the pretext that they were going to war; all troops were to be under the orders of the King, and paid by him—all wars to be Royal wars. The Roi de Bourges had well chosen his moment for declaring, in the teeth of his semi-independent nobility, that he intended henceforth to be Roi de France. For

it had so happened that armies of the *écorceurs* had just come off second best in two attempted acts of brigandage on a large scale. The first had been when, invading Switzerland, they had failed in seizing and putting to ransom all the great dignitaries assembled at the Council of Bâle; the second when they had suffered severely in their pillaging expedition into Alsace.

The *écorceurs* were now weak and Charles, feeling himself strong, loosed the Constable de Richemont against them, to do justice upon such as had been complained against to him for their robberies and cruelties. Arthur de Richemont did his work well, punishing with a ruthless hand, and at the same time his brother Jean V., Duc de Bretagne, followed his example in Brittany, by burning that horrible sorcerer and murderer of children, the Maréchal Gilles de Retz. While Charles VII. had by his side such Princes as Charles, Comte du Maine, of the great family of Anjou, the brother of the good King René of Sicily, Lorraine, and Provence, and the Comte de Dunois, the famous Bastard of Orléans, it was not to them that he turned for support against the grumblings that now arose from the discomfited nobles, but to Jacques Cœur and to Jean Bureau. From that extraordinary man Cœur, whose great riches were obtained by equivocal methods of trading in the East, the King was able to obtain the sinews of war in the shape of money, while in Bureau he found a leader of armies quite as good as any among the Seigneurs who had made of arms their profession from boyhood.

To back him up in his resolve to put down the nobles with a strong hand, he had moreover the

counsels of three women, all clever and shrewd in their respective ways. Of these, the first in age and place was Yolande, the widow of Louis II., Comte d'Anjou and titular King of Sicily and Naples. The Queen Yolande was mother of the King René just mentioned, and of the Comte du Maine, she was likewise the mother of Marie d'Anjou, whom she had given to Charles VII. as wife.

The daughter of King Juan I. of Aragon and of the heiress of the Duchy of Bar, no more ambitious or designing woman than Yolande ever figured in the annals of French history. She was, moreover, as clever as she was designing, with the result that, in the end, her schemes were always crowned with success. Among these, it may be mentioned, was that by which she obtained both the Duchies of Bar and Lorraine, with Isabelle, the heiress of Lorraine, into the bargain, for her son René.

Her advice was always worth following, as Charles VII. discovered, perhaps for the first time, when, by following the counsels of Yolande, he consented to make use of the services of Joan of Arc.

The second woman whose influence upon Charles was great, indeed far greater than is usually acknowledged by historians, was his wife, Marie d'Anjou. He married her in the year 1422, when he was himself but a boy of nineteen, without backbone and entirely without reputation. She was good and faithful to him although he was utterly unworthy of fidelity, and it was in great measure owing to the credit of his wife, as to that of his wife's mother, that he owed the fact of his not having altogether gone under when his own mother, Isabeau, had agreed to his being branded

as illegitimate in the Treaty of Troyes, under the name of the "soi-disant Dauphin." It was undoubtedly to the courage and good counsels of his wife Marie that Charles owed the fact of his ever having risen from the depth of ignoble indolence to which he was inclined to descend. She supported him from his early years, and, despite his ingratitude and faithlessness, endeavoured constantly to inspire him with the spark of manhood of which for so many years he appeared to be so woefully deficient. In the end, however, Charles de Valois allowed this good and worthy wife to fall into utter neglect, nor was she more cared for by her son, Louis XI., who permitted her to die in abject poverty at Poitiers in 1463, two years after the death of her husband. Much of the credit due to Marie d'Anjou has been accorded to the third woman who influenced Charles VII., namely, the best-known of his mistresses, Agnès Sorel.

To this woman whom, perhaps merely because she was a mistress, not a wife, it has pleased so many writers to praise so highly, Marie d'Anjou ever showed herself a friend, nobly suppressing all signs of jealousy when, nine years after her own marriage, Charles VII. took her to his adulterous bed. Subsequently this Prince would appear, for the period of twenty years, to have led a polygamous life with the pair, during which time both the wife and the paramour continued alternately to present him with daughters, and eventually the Queen with a second son, named Charles. Of the beauty of Agnès Sorel there appears to be no doubt, also of the fact that hers was a beneficent effect upon the unstable Charles. Olivier de la Marche says of her "*Certes ! Agnès was*

one of the most beautiful women that ever I saw, and, in her quality, she did much good to the Kingdom." The strange thing about her, in modern eyes, seems to be that, in the same way as the Queen was not jealous of her, neither was she jealous of another woman, but herself presented to the King her cousin, Antoinette de Maignelais, who was two years younger than herself, when Charles added that young lady also to his harem.

Agnès herself was the daughter of a certain magistrate named Jean Sureau, Sorelle, or Surelle, who was a Consciller of the Comte de Clermont. When granted arms by the King she chose for her blazon a "sureau," or elder-bush. Being a native of Touraine, she was removed in her youth to the Duchy of Lorraine, where she was brought up with that Isabelle of Lorraine who became the wife of René d'Anjou. The unscrupulousness of Queen Yolande is shown in the manner in which Agnès became the mistress of Charles VII. When Yolande's daughter-in-law, Isabelle, came to France to beg for aid to get her husband, René d'Anjou, freed from the prison into which he had been cast, as a prisoner of war, by the Duc Philippe de Bourgogne, she brought Agnès Sorel with her. Queen Yolande saw her beauty, and thought that she could make her useful. Therefore, although her daughter Marie was the Queen, the intriguing old Princess threw Agnès in the way of her son-in-law Charles VII., whose passions were immediately aroused. Schooled in advance by Queen Yolande d'Anjou, Agnès was careful not to appear too coy, with the result that the beautiful maiden was soon installed as *maîtresse en titre*.

Through Agnès, Yolande sought ever after, and not without success, to bind Charles closer to the interests of the house of Anjou, and that she was also of much use in giving good counsels to the King about other matters would appear to be more than probable.

From the above it will be perceived that, in addition to his two sturdy counsellors, Jacques Cœur and Jean Bureau, Charles VII. was solidly supported by a trinity of women whose views and aims were one and indivisible. An immediate result of the coming of Agnès Sorel was seen in the disappearance from the Court of Charles of an unworthy favourite, Georges de la Trémouille, one who had long been the enemy and rival of the Comte de Richemont, who had himself brought him to the notice of the King. Marie d'Anjou had long tried in vain to remove from her husband the evil influence of Trémouille, and when, therefore, the fair Agnès accomplished the object for which she had long fruitlessly struggled it was entirely to the Queen's satisfaction.

CHAPTER II

The Princes and the Praguerie

1440—1441

WHEN Dunois, the famous Bastard of Orléans, saw the way in which the cat was jumping at the Court of his Royal cousin Charles, he soon recognised the fact that the princes and great nobles would become discontented. In fact, he became so himself, not feeling at all inclined to play merely third fiddle to the two *roturiers* and the trinity of women. Charles might be *bien servi*—well served—he should be so no longer by him, unless he amended his ways and went back to old traditions! So declared the warlike son of the late Duc Louis d'Orléans and the lovely young wife of the Sieur de Canny.

Having determined to separate his fortunes as much as possible from those of the King, Dunois got into touch with the Duc Philippe de Bourgogne, a ruler who has on such frail grounds been surnamed Philippe le Bon. He imagined, and not without reason, that, in spite of his recent reconciliation with a King who was introducing such innovations, the Duc Philippe might not be averse to strengthening the party of the Princes who were opposed to these new-fangled ideas.

To do this it would be necessary to bring back from England, where he had been detained for twenty-five years since the battle of Agincourt, the poet—Duc Charles d'Orléans, the half-brother of Dunois. An enormous ransom was required by England for his liberty, and Dunois hoped that the rich Duchy of Burgundy might be induced to pay it. This idea would seem to have been an extraordinary one, when it is remembered that, of all the Princes of the French Blood-Royal who were likely to hate each other, those of Orléans and Burgundy were the most opposed.

The cause of this hatred commenced by the murder, which was most treacherous and cold-blooded, of the Duc Louis d'Orléans, the father of the Duc Charles and Dunois, by his first cousin, Jean Sans Peur, the father of the Duc Philippe de Bourgogne. To increase the hatred, the second wife of the poet Charles had been Bonne, a daughter of the Comte Bernard d'Armagnac, the semi-independent princeling from the south of France, who may be said to have started the bitter wars of the Armagnacs, or Orleanists, against the Burgundians.

In spite of this old quarrel, since the Duc Philippe had patched up his quarrel with the King, who had, in turn, massacred, by treachery, his father, this same Jean Sans Peur, Dunois did not despair of success in his negotiations. Nor was he wrong, with the result that, before long, the Duc de Bourgogne and another Prince of the Blood, the Duc Jean d'Alençon, were working together to bring back the Duc Charles d'Orléans.

Others readily joined in the intrigue, by which it

was hoped to embarrass Charles VII., among these being the Bastard of Bourbon, La Marck, nicknamed the Wild Boar of the Ardennes, La Trémouille, the enemy of the Comte de Richemont, and Chabannes—all great soldiers and leaders of the *écorcheurs*, or flayers.

As insurrection was determined on, and, as the release of Charles d'Orléans could not be arranged in a hurry with the English, all of the discontented leaders in France looked about for a head. For, although Burgundy might not be averse to taxing her numerous States and Provinces to raise the required ransom, it was out of the question to expect her to plunge into a new war, merely to fight against the introduction of new ideas concerning the army into the land of France, with which she had recently concluded a peace.

Looking about for a leader, the Princes and nobles wondered if they might not find that leader in the King's own son, Louis, the sixteen-year-old Dauphin. Young as was the Dauphin, he had already carried arms, and not without success, against some discontented partisans of Gilles de Retz on the borders of Brittany, but to ask him to rise in arms against his father was another matter. Upon one point, however, he agreed with the nobles: this was in his hatred of the King's mistress and anger at the dominion which she had acquired over Charles VII. Heartless and hard as the boy was from an early age, he yet resented the presence of Agnès Sorel far more than did his mother, and, jealous of his mother's honour, even went so far as to slap Agnès on the face.

Subtle and cunning from his earliest years, the Dauphin Louis, like his grandmother Yolande, was for ever weaving schemes. Ever restless and desirous of change, he was never so happy as when upsetting some old institution and moving ahead to something new.

Entirely dissatisfied as he was with his father, with his father's mistress and her power, the Dauphin, who was a bigot in religious matters from childhood, doubtless also resented the Pragmatic by which Charles VII. had deprived the Church of her ancient privileges. Whatever the boy's reasons, his ambition was aroused when he was asked by the Duc Charles I. de Bourbon and Jean II. d'Alençon to head the movement by which, his father being deposed, the Dauphin was to become the Regent of the Kingdom. He accordingly willingly agreed to become a rebel and the leader of the insurrection which, from its resemblance to the great Praguerie of Bohemia, was known as the Praguerie of France.

The handsome Duc de Bourbon, who had taken the leading part until the Dauphin consented to head the rebellion, was a Prince of the Blood, being doubly descended from King Louis IX., while d'Alençon was likewise of Royal lineage, having had for ancestor King Philippe III.

Of the former it has been said that "he possessed the most athletic frame in France, that he was an Absalom, a Trojan of Paris." He was no longer young, and his wife was a daughter of Jean Sans Peur. The Duc Jean d'Alençon, who had formerly been a great favourite with Joan of Arc, who called

him her "gentil Duc," had for mother a Princess of the House of Brittany, and he was the nephew of the reigning Duc of that country. He was married to a sister of the Duc Charles d'Orléans, whom it was hoped to bring back to France from his English captivity. Another Prince who was drawn into the confederacy was King René, the head of the house of Anjou. He had a grudge against his brother-in-law, the King, on a question of money as also had the Duc d'Alençon, both alike having been shabbily treated in matters of large ransoms which the King had not helped them to pay when they were prisoners of war.

These great Princes, being connected with the Duc de Bretagne, had drawn that potentate into their faction, and thus the unfortunate Charles VII. would appear to have been deserted by all his relatives, who were banded against him under his son. Even the English were drawn into the conspiracy by these French Princes and nobles, among whom was soon to be found the great Comte de Vendôme, troops being offered to England by the Duc de Bretagne to defend the city of Avranches against the French Royal troops. The Dauphin was soon to be seen, at the head of numerous forces, at the town of Niort in Poitou, which belonged to d'Alençon, and it might have been imagined that he would soon bring his father to his knees, in this his first attempt at rebellion.

The contrary was, however, to prove the case. The bold advisers of the King would not allow him to obey the dictates of his heart and shut himself up, with those faithful to him, in some strong place. On the other hand, they compelled him at once to take the



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field, and soon, with the aid of Richemont, he subdued Poitou. Having captured the town of Saint-Maixent, all of the followers of one the *écorcheurs*, named de la Roche were decapitated, while those of d'Alençon, who were also present, were, however, diplomatically spared.

The Dauphin then proceeded to Auvergne, but there the youthful Louis met with no more success, for the artillery of Jean Bureau soon demolished all of the fortresses held by his followers. Seeing that matters were not going as he expected, the Comte de Dunois now made up his mind to see if, by yielding without waiting for his fellow conspirators, he could not gain something for himself. He came to the King, by whom he was well received, and was shortly followed by d'Alençon, Bourbon, and the Dauphin himself. While the two Princes of the Blood were at once pardoned, and the Duc de Bourbon even accorded a large annual pension, as a result of their submission, Charles showed himself by no means inclined to be too easy with his rebellious son, when he refused to accept a pardon which would not include all of his friends, among them his father's former favourite, La Trémouille. The King thereupon merely replied sarcastically, "Louis, the gates are big enough for you to go, or, if you prefer it, I will knock down sixteen or twenty fathoms of wall for you to depart by."

The Dauphin then concluded to draw in his horns and remain, but La Trémouille was subsequently pardoned and even entrusted with a diplomatic mission.

Thus ended the Praguerie de France, but the King, thinking his son would for the future be better at a

distance, made over to him the government of the Province of Dauphiné, where Louis commenced to rule almost as an independent Monarch.

While the country of France was thus disturbed by internecine troubles, the English took the town of Harfleur. They likewise, at the prayer of the Duc de Bourgogne, consented to release the Duc d'Orléans, the Princes of Burgundy paying down a large portion of his ransom, on account.

This Prince, who had been a prisoner from the age of twenty-one to that of forty-six, was now a widower for the second time. Instead of, upon liberation, proceeding to the Court of France, he betook himself direct to that of Burgundy. There he was received with a right Royal hospitality which was extremely vexing to Charles VII. Not only did Duc Philippe, the old enemy of his House, invest him with the coveted Order of the Golden Fleece, but, further to distinguish his guest, he gave to the Duc d'Orléans in marriage his niece, Marie, the daughter of the Duke of Clèves.

The intimacy of these old enemies contained an evident threat to the King, and the King's plebeian counsellors advised him therefore not to be caught napping, but to be ahead of his possible foes. With his Richemont and his Jean Bureau he marched off accordingly to the north, to the frontiers of Burgundy, and there did signal justice upon such of the Burgundian, Lorraine, and other *écorcheurs* as he could lay hands upon. The Fates were propitious to Charles VII., and he made a good haul of the unscrupulous captains of the free companies. Among them he captured a famous leader, one who counted as a Bourbon, although it was by the wrong side of

the blanket. The Bastard of Bourbon thought that he would get off as easily as his relative, the Duc of that name. Never did he make a greater mistake! They put him in a sack and threw him into a river to drown. This drowning was a direct menace to Burgundy as well as to Bourbon, the unfortunate Bastard having been the right-hand man and intermediary of the two Ducs.

Another noble of the frontier who suffered the King's vengeance was the Comte de Saint-Pol, a young gentleman of great domains. This Louis of Luxembourg, who was later to become a brother-in-law of Louis XI. and a Constable of France, was closely connected with Burgundy, and all the more on that account did the King instruct the honest Jean Bureau to bombard his fortresses until he knocked them all to pieces. He obtained his pardon but was compelled later humbly to sue to the Parliament of Paris in the matter of his succession to the estates of Ligny.

Meanwhile Paris was in a state of misery, which was greatly increased when the English, mounting the Seine from Rouen, under the command of Lord Clifford, took Pontoise. The Duke of York, who had become Regent of France, came with gallant old Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, to revictual the place when it was besieged by Charles VII., but vainly tried to force the King to a battle. Charles kept out of the way, and fortified himself strongly. Twice more the English relieved Pontoise, and when they were worn out with their repeated efforts Charles returned, and then Jean Bureau got to work with his terrible artillery. After the walls had been knocked down in several places and several attempts to storm the place

had failed, the French eventually bravely carried Pontoise by assault, and by the fall of this place Paris was greatly relieved.

Instead of being grateful to the King, the Parisians, many of whom regretted the good old days when Henry V. of England or Bedford ruled, only hated the King and grumbled at the taxes. All of the great conspirators of the Praguerie, with the exception of the Dauphin, who was too far off, took advantage of this disaffection of Paris to stir up the inhabitants of other cities against Charles VII. The Princes now insisted upon an immediate peace, they said, in the interests of "the poor people of France," and likewise demanded from the King the suppression of those very brigands that they themselves were doing so much to maintain. Thirdly, while they insisted that the poor people were to be relieved of all taxes, every one of the leagued nobles demanded something for himself.

The real object of this new league was to obtain for the Princes a share in the Government from which they had been ousted. The King answered the nobles with fair words, and bought them off with rewards, but he kept them out of the Government, which he continued with the two *roturiers* and Agnès Sorel.

CHAPTER III

Albret, Armagnac, and Foix

1440—1460

THE English had only allowed the Duc d'Orléans to be released upon his making a solemn declaration to the effect that he was "wholly Burgundian, in heart, in body, and in power"; there was therefore the more reason for Charles VII. to attempt to buy over the good-will of the Princes after the return of his powerful cousin. His brother, Jean d'Orléans, was also released from captivity, a year or so later; but he never gave the King any cause for anxiety, being content to live peaceably in his County of Angoulême, with which the Duc d'Orléans presented him, while Dunois, the illegitimate half-brother of these two Princes, remained practically the head of the Orléans family. Charles VII. found it necessary to buy the Duc's fidelity. It cost the King pretty dear! First he had to allow his cousin an annual pension of 18,000 livres, and then, to enable him to pay off outstanding debts to the English, Charles VII. found himself compelled to raise for d'Orléans the immense sum of 169,000 golden crowns.

The Duc was not, however, content, but com-

pelled the King also to bestir himself to press his Italian claims to the Duchy of Milan and the County of Asti. These claims, which were later to cause so much bloodshed to France, were inherited by the Duc d'Orléans from his mother, Valentina Visconti, daughter of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan. That Duchy had, however, been seized upon by Francesco Sforza, who had married Bianca, an illegitimate daughter of one of Valentina's brothers.

On behalf of René d'Anjou the King found himself also called upon to intervene, in order to purchase his fidelity. He accordingly contrived to induce the Duc de Bourgogne to remit a considerable part of the as yet unpaid ransom of his brother-in-law, René, and at the same time to force the Comte de Vaudemont, the rival claimant to the Duchy of Lorraine, to come to an arrangement with him. Further, Charles VII. supplied the funds to enable René to make an expedition into Italy to fight against Alfonso V. of Aragon for his claims to the Kingdom of Naples.

While from the Duc d'Orléans Charles VII. had no more trouble, "the good King" René recognised his favours by no longer aiding those who were unfaithful to his brother-in-law. Being an artist of great ability, René thenceforward devoted his leisure to the pursuit of painting rather than that of French politics.

These pressing matters being settled, the King determined to make a great military expedition to the south of France, the English being strong in Guyenne, and having the sympathy of those almost independent Princes the Comte d'Armagnac, the

Comte de Foix, and the Comte d'Albret. This latter, who was besieged by the English, warned the King that he intended to yield and make common cause with them unless he made his appearance in force by June 23, 1442, when, greatly to the astonishment of the Gascons, Charles duly arrived with a well-constituted army. For the first time the Gascon inhabitants of the south, who, from the twelfth century, when Eleanor of Aquitaine married Henry II. of England, had been accustomed to look upon England as paramount, now came to render homage and feudal service to a King of France. Having settled some quarrels between those two great tyrants of the Spanish borders, the Comtes d'Armagnac and de Foix, Charles VII. established a Royal Parliament at Toulouse, to which the inhabitants of the neighbourhood were authorised to resort in the future for the justice of which they had been hitherto denied. Then, having authorised the people of Languedoc to take up arms on their own behalf against the *deorcheurs* who still roamed the country, he gradually returned to the north. There the English, under old Talbot, were strong in Normandy, and now seriously threatening Dieppe, which had recently been taken from them by surprise.

The Dauphin Louis, having obtained his father's permission to return from Dauphiné, was now allowed to appear in arms upon the Royal side. With his late fellow-conspirator Dunois, Louis very soon distinguished himself by taking by assault a strong bastille or fort which Talbot had erected to menace Dieppe, and garrisoned not only with English but a number of Burgundians, who, in spite of the paci-

fication of Arras, had entered the English service. During his short siege of this bastille the Dauphin had been much annoyed by the personal abuse shouted at him from the walls. When the place fell the youthful Louis accordingly determined to take a cruel revenge. He instantly hanged sixty of the Burgundians, and then, causing the English prisoners to be paraded before him, selected those whom he recognised, or thought that he recognised, as having addressed him by vile epithets. These he strung up to all the apple-trees in the neighbourhood.

Meanwhile, the Duke of Somerset was cruising off the coast with a fleet that had arrived too late to give assistance. He landed and made a night-attack, in which he killed thirty Frenchmen, and then retired with his fleet to Rouen, which was still in English occupation, and there remained for the winter.

In the meantime there was fresh trouble in the south, where Armagnac was again in revolt, and the Comte Jean IV. even endeavouring to arrange a marriage between his young daughter and Henry VI. of England.

The English King had even sent a painter from England to make the young lady's portrait, and, the matter being therefore considered serious, the Dauphin Louis obtained permission to go with an army to assert the Royal authority in the Gascon provinces.

From ancient times the Houses of Foix, Albret, and Armagnac had considered themselves independent. That of Albret, which was later to give birth to Henry of Navarre, had recently sided with Charles VII.; but until the year 1436 Jean de Grailly, Comte de

Foix, had been endeavouring to profit by the misfortunes of Charles, for he, like his predecessors and the other nobles of the Pyrenean border, had nothing but contempt for the French Kings. Jean's successor, Gaston IV. de Foix, had maintained but a very doubtful neutrality during the Praguerie. The King of France was shortly afterwards in dispute with Gaston, because he styled himself Comte "by the grace of God," and, further, refused to allow a French tax-collector within his domains.

Gaston then consented to remove the words "by the grace of God" from his titles, but remained firm in excluding the collectors of revenue. He, however, pleased Charles VII. by affecting the greatest indignation at the Dauphin's unfilial conduct. Gaston de Foix had reason for wishing to obtain the King's good graces, as he required his support for his Spanish policy. He had married Éléonore, the daughter of Blanche, Queen of Navarre, and Juan II., King of Aragon. Éléonore had a brother, Don Carlos, Prince of Viana, who was heir to the throne of his mother's Kingdom. The King of Aragon, however, upon the death of Queen Blanche in 1446, usurped Navarre, then imprisoned his son Carlos, and in 1455 he disinherited him in favour of Gaston IV. de Foix and Éléonore. While Gaston contrived to get Charles VII. to officially approve of this iniquitous arrangement, Juan II. cruelly poisoned his son in prison (1461).

When Éléonore eventually took over the throne of Navarre, Gaston left his wife to manage the affairs of that country, and was himself to be seen continually dancing attendance upon the King of France in order to keep himself in favour.

The Comtes d'Armagnac, fierce, bloody, and cruel, did not show themselves as amenable as Albret and Foix, but imagined themselves strong enough to continue the policy of their ancestors before the Kings of France had become strong. Failing to realise that the French Kingdom was becoming consolidated, the two Comtes Jean IV. and Jean V. d'Armagnac continued to intrigue with the English. It was a policy which before long they would learn to regret.

The trouble began when, at about the time of the birth of Charles VII., a certain Mathieu de Foix married the heiress of the adjacent County of Comminges. She had already been married to an Armagnac, and the two families quarrelled about her possessions. To keep the Comtesse out of the way of interfering in the dispute, her husband, Foix, put her in a dungeon, where he kept the poor lady for over twenty years. The Comte Jean IV. d'Armagnac, at the end of that period, thought that by forcibly releasing the Comtesse he could get her into his power, and persuade her to make over her County to him. Having got Charles VII. to aid him in the matter, Jean d'Armagnac set the unhappy woman at liberty, the King of France, however, stipulating that Foix and Armagnac were to divide the revenues of Comminges during her lifetime, but that, when she died, the County was to revert to the Crown of France.

To this Jean d'Armagnac pretended to agree, but no sooner was the Comtesse Marguerite dead, in 1443, than, by force of arms, he seized the principal places in Comminges. The further to annoy Charles VII., when the King asked Armagnac to pay dues to the

Monarchy the insolent Comte replied haughtily that he was no vassal of the King of France! Upon the top of this insult came the proposal of the Comte Jean to marry his daughter to the King of England, whereupon Charles VII. thought that the cup was full.

In the middle of the winter the Dauphin came down with an army to stop the matrimonial game, and, in spite of snows and floods, he soon succeeded in besieging the saucy Comte in a strong place. Thence he managed to extract him by guile, calling him "his fair cousin," and making friendly overtures. D'Armagnac was deceived; he came out, declaring that he and all that he had were at the disposal of the King of France, when Louis, laughing in his sleeve, clapped him into prison in the Castle of Lavaur. He then proceeded to annex all the territories of Armagnac, which proceeding so alarmed the other southern princelings that d'Albret commenced hurriedly to arm and to manufacture artillery.

For a couple of years Jean IV. was kept in prison, and then, as his adherents were commencing to arm, Charles VII. thought it wiser to conciliate them by releasing their Comte and Seigneur. He did not do so, however, without first thoroughly humbling the rebel. Jean was forced to make a public confession of all his crimes, and those which he had permitted to his followers. These included murders, acts of brigandage, rapes, and attempts against the King's Majesty.

When he had likewise vowed to behave himself properly for the future, Charles VII. gave him back the larger share of his possessions. At the same time,

however, he maintained his own troops in garrison in several of Armagnac's towns.

Five years later (1450) Jean IV. was succeeded by Jean V., who had fought gallantly for the King in various campaigns. Upon him, hoping to keep him faithful, Charles VII. showered rewards; but he soon proved himself Armagnac to the core. He declared himself an independent Sovereign, he seized the County of Comminges when Mathieu de Foix died, and he kept in friendly relations with the English. Finally, the life led by Jean V. d'Armagnac was a public scandal. He made a mistress of his sister, and, when he had had three children by her, publicly made her his wife.

The French armies now again invaded Armagnac, and, in spite of the resistance of the warlike inhabitants, the County was entirely subjugated. As the Comte refused to surrender himself for trial before the Parliament of Paris, he was condemned in default, in 1460, as guilty of incest and rebellion, and sentenced to perpetual banishment and the confiscation of his domains.

CHAPTER IV

How Louis Led the "Écorcheurs"

1443—1445

IN England at this time there were two parties, that for continuing the war with France and that for peace. The leader of the war-party was Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, brother of the late Henry V. and uncle of the young Henry VI. He was strongly opposed in England by his old uncle, Henry Beaufort, Cardinal Bishop of Winchester, and other powerful prelates, and likewise by the Earl of Suffolk, a brave soldier, who had fought for England on many a bloody field.

The expense of the fruitless expedition of Edmund, Duke of Somerset, had been an object-lesson to those who were tired of paying for the Sovereignty, real or nominal, of France, which country had for years brought in nothing to support the English exchequer. The only people to profit by the French Sovereignty, from the time of the assumption of rule by Henry V., shortly after the battle of Agincourt, had been the English churchmen and nobles. The former held fat benefices in Normandy, the latter were supplied, or had supplied themselves, with huge feudal estates. The Church benefices in France had now, many of them, reverted to Frenchmen; the English prelates,

therefore, were not anxious to be called upon to subscribe to a prolongation of a war which would solely benefit a few nobles who owned castles and lands in France.

The party of the Bishops and Suffolk having gained the upper hand, a long truce was arranged between England and Charles VII., while also it was proposed by Suffolk that he should find a nice French wife for the young Henry VI.—he had such an one in his mind's eye, a young lady whose charms he had seen and greatly admired.

The truce was all very well as a breathing-space for the two countries, who for so many years had been flying at each others' throats. The question arose, however, to both at once, what was to become of their armies, largely composed of cut-throat mercenaries of half a dozen different nationalities, many of them French to-day, but then speaking different tongues or dialects.

It was easy enough to discharge them, but they would only, as *écorcheurs*, or flayers, go about skinning the country, whether it might be in the English or French parts of France. Charles VII., controlling now by far the greater part of the Kingdom, was likely to suffer the more severely from their lawless depredations.

A good idea occurred to his mind, which was to collect all the loose ends of both the French and English armies and send them off elsewhere, to pillage outside the French dominions. The ambitious young Dauphin was perfectly willing to command them, and the King was fortunate enough to find his opportunity of sending them off to be killed. The exact

limits of the German, or, to be more accurate, of the Holy Roman Empire, were at this time but loosely defined. The Empire claimed rights both over Switzerland and over the Duchy of Lorraine. The greater number of the Swiss Cantons, however, had for some time past absolutely refused to acknowledge claims which had once been real, while in Lorraine Metz and other towns had practically become independent merchant republics, maintaining their troops and openly flouting the Duke of the country. The Emperor at that day was Frederick III., and he was by no means strong enough to maintain his dominant rights over all the countries and States subject to his rule as Suzerain.

It accordingly chanced that Frederick appealed to Charles VII. to assist him with troops to subdue the Swiss, at the same time as King René, ruler of Lorraine, was asking his brother-in-law for troops to subdue some towns belonging to the Empire. Taking advantage of this lucky chance, Charles VII. determined at the same time to fight against the Empire in Lorraine and for the Empire in Switzerland.

In this latter country Zurich alone had declared itself as still subject to the Emperor, with the result that the other Cantons of the Swiss confederation were fiercely besieging Zurich, while vowing to wipe it out from the face of the earth. Already the Cantons had gained great advantages, and had decapitated wholesale the garrison of a town belonging to Zurich—they were even said to have drunk the blood and eaten the hearts of their enemies! Although Zurich was thus allied to the Emperor, Frederick III. was so weak that he was unable to

send troops to help his ally, which was in the greatest danger. In Lorraine, on the other hand, he was too weak to assist the troops of the towns in revolt against René, although some independent German nobles had thrown themselves into them, to aid the citizens.

In the hopes of getting as many as possible of the troublesome *écorcheurs* killed off in these two quarrels, Louis the Dauphin assembled under his banner an immense number of the disbanded ruffians. Taking the title of Commandant-General, he collected a vast horde of troops of all nations. He had fourteen thousand Frenchmen, eight thousand Englishmen, and all kinds of other trained soldiers, such as Bretons, Gascons, and men from Dauphiné, under his command. It may here be mentioned that, although many years had elapsed since its last independent ruler, the Dauphin de Vienne, had left the Province of Dauphiné to the eldest son of France, it, like Switzerland, still remained theoretically attached to the Holy Roman Empire.

The Dauphin passing with his great force of rapscallions through the territories of Burgundy, such was the horrible licence of their behaviour that the Duc de Bourgogne, had he felt strong enough at the moment, would certainly have declared war against France. As it was, pillaging everywhere, the army of *écorcheurs* arrived in Alsace and soon threatened Bâle on the Swiss borders. There the Ecclesiastical Council was still sitting, and it was well known that the Pope had offered money to the Dauphin to rid him of the unruly prelates who dared to question his authority. In spite of the alarming reports sent from Bâle to the



LOUIS THE DAPHIN'S ATTACK ON THE BASTILLE OF DIEPPE

Swiss in the field, these were not discouraged, but a body of stalwart infantry, armed with the halberds that they were famed for using with such deadly effect, determined to advance to the attack when the French hordes, skirting the mountains of the Jura, arrived at a river called the Birse. Although fresh messengers came from Bâle warning them of the immense number of their foes on the line of march, several thousand of the Swiss pikemen, in close order, charged down furiously and unexpectedly upon the advance-guard of the Dauphin's army after it had crossed the river.

Their assault was too impetuous to resist—they crumpled up their foes and sent them flying back across the river, leaving their baggage in the hands of the victors.

The Dauphin Louis, however, skilfully detached a large number of his polyglot troops to a flank, so that they should be able to prevent the people of Bâle from issuing forth to join the Swiss in the field. These, however, intoxicated with their victory, fearlessly crossed the Birse, moving on to level ground where the Dauphin's men-at-arms could easily ride them down. A furious charge broke up the Swiss infantry at once, but, rallying, they took advantage of every hedge, every wall, even that of a cemetery where many of them were to find their graves. Behind this wall was a tower, in which many of the Swiss took refuge, and they now considered themselves safe from the horsemen.

The *écorcheurs* of the various nations serving under the Dauphin's banner were as fierce as the Swiss. Leaping from their horses, they stormed the

walls, the hedges, and eventually set fire to the tower. The hand-to-hand encounter was long and determined; none on either side asked for quarter, and none obtained it. Never in the annals of Switzerland had her troops fought so bravely; their fierce courage was, however, of no avail, and by the end of the day not a single Swiss was left alive. The remainder of the Swiss were terrified at the lesson; those before the town of Zurich hurriedly retired with the scoffing taunts of its defenders ringing in their ears. The bourgeois of Bâle, and those assembled at the Council, were glad to come to terms with the Dauphin, to avoid the horrors of a sack, and thus many nobles within the city, whom the populace were about to murder, escaped with their lives.

After pillaging Switzerland for a time, and then in turn ravaging the richer provinces of Alsace and Swabia belonging to the Empire, the Dauphin thought that his mission was accomplished. He had succeeded in getting a large number of his cut-throat bands killed, and he now concluded a peace with the Swiss and returned with the remnants of his force to France (1444).

The Dauphin's success was great, as he had brought the rich towns of Lorraine likewise to their bearings. From Metz he had extracted an immense ransom, and an implied acknowledgment that the city depended from the Crown of France and not from that of the Empire, while Toul and Verdun had unrestrictedly recognised the King of France as their protector.

With pockets well lined, Louis returned to France; he had, moreover, greatly raised the reputation of the

French arms. The captains, who hitherto had declared themselves independent, had moreover fought, in a more or less disciplined manner, under a French Royal leader, thus acknowledging their dependence upon the King. The time had, thought Charles VII., now come accordingly for him to put in force the great military reforms, the mere threat of which had been in a great measure the cause of the rising of the Princes and nobles in the rebellion of the Praguerie. The greater number of the nobles were themselves now ready to listen to the King's views, while the professional captains of free bands saw that it would be entirely to their advantage to be employed as Royal soldiers, receiving regular pay.

Thus was a regular Royal army constituted, and upon the following lines. The great captains of the free companies being offered the commands, fifteen companies, each of one hundred *gens d'armes*, or men-at-arms, were raised. At six men to a lance, this made six hundred men to each corps or company, which was known as a *Compagnie d'Ordonnance*. All of the men-at-arms whom the King did not require for his standing army of mounted men now were told to disband, and their leaders threatened with terrible penalties should they seek to maintain them. There were grumblings, of course—those ordered to cease from their life of war and pillage threatened to rise in rebellion, while the people, who now had to pay for the authorised troops, were naturally discontented at the reform, which, however, went through and became permanent.

To meet the necessary expenses, Jacques Cœur now put the finances in order, showing an administra-

tive power worthy of a Colbert of a couple of hundred years later. To keep down the brigands, the Provost of Paris was also given a high authority over all the Seigneurs of the Kingdom who had hitherto maintained them. He had the powers of life and death in his hands, and, although the remedy was felt to be a very severe one by the nobles, the merchants and people of the Kingdom were the gainers—trade was restored and the lands cultivated.

Hitherto there had never been any infantry in France, and a step was now taken by Jacques Cœur and Jean Bureau by which the nucleus of such a force was established. There were endless sneers at the "franc archers," or free archers who were the first French infantry soldiers, but they became useful before long. The way in which they were raised was as follows. The *élus* or elected ones to apportion the taxes were no longer, as hitherto, the men of the nobles, but the men of the King. These *élus* were told to select a suitable man in each parish, one if possible who had already borne arms, and to excuse him from paying any taxes upon condition that he became an archer and practised archery. In peace time he was to receive no wages, but he would be given regular pay in war when called out. These militia-men were laughed at a good deal in the beginning, especially as the parishes from which they were selected had to pay for their equipment, and thus satires were written upon them, in one of which the "franc archer" was represented as taking a scarecrow for a man-at-arms and falling at the feet of the scarecrow to beg for mercy. The free archers very soon, however, proved themselves to be sturdy men of war, and gave the King great aid when, in Guyenne

and Normandy, he found himself, after the truce, again opposed to the English.

From the moment of these great reforms may be said to have commenced the unity of France—the welding into one homogeneous whole of a France which had hitherto consisted of nothing but a quantity of discordant Provinces.

CHAPTER V

Marguerite and her Friend Suffolk

WHILE matters were so improving for Charles VII., the Earl of Suffolk was doing him a good turn by which the French Monarchy was to benefit greatly before long. In the interests of the English party which was for peace at any price, Suffolk was determined to marry Henry VI., now twenty-three years of age, to a young Princess of French blood. She was one whose name was, for many years to come, to be rarely uttered save when accompanied with a curse by at least half of the inhabitants of the British Isles.

This young girl was but fifteen years of age—she was remarkably beautiful and intelligent, and the daughter of René d'Anjou and that Isabelle of Lorraine with whom René had obtained the Duchy.

René was also the practically independent Comte of both Anjou and Provence, but, owing to the wars which his father and he had waged for the throne of Naples and Sicily, this owner of three huge Provinces was, practically speaking, as poor as a mouse. There could therefore be no question of his giving any large money dowry with his daughter. This daughter, Marguerite of Lorraine, or Anjou, had been born while her father was in a Burgundian prison. At the

same time, oddly enough, René's rival claimant to the Neapolitan throne was in a Milanese prison, as the captive of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan. Her warlike mother, Isabelle of Lorraine, was herself waging war in Italy against this rival, Alfonso of Aragon, and carried it on with him for three years after he obtained his liberty. While Isabelle of Lorraine was thus gallantly fighting for a Crown that she never obtained, her young daughter Marguerite was left by her in the Angevin County of Provence, at Marseilles. From her earliest youth Marguerite was thus brought up in an atmosphere of war and intrigue, to which circumstance must be accredited the fact that she so boldly took the field herself later, in the sanguinary Wars of the Roses.

She was, says an old English chronicler, "a woman of great brain, great pride, and greedy of glory and honour, not without diligence and application, not, moreover, without experience of affairs. With all this, she was a very woman, and capricious. Thus, when she was all excitement and animated for a certain affair, often the wind would change, and she, like a weathercock, change with it."

More favourable chroniclers, notably those of Provence, have spoken of her as having possessed the features of an angel in her youth, while later, even in her age and misfortunes, Marguerite never lost her dignity and majesty. She had, when Suffolk asked her for Henry VI., already twice been affianced, once to the Comte Charles de Nevers and again to the Comte de Saint-Pol. Both of these suitors were unlucky—the estates of Charles de Nevers were filched from him by his cousin, the Duc de Bourgogne,

while Saint-Pol eventually terminated his career of intrigue on the scaffold.

What, however, could have been more unlucky than the career of Henry, whom she actually married? what more sadly unfortunate than her own? Truly it may be said that, from the first, the lovely Marguerite was doomed to misfortune.

Several French Queens of English Kings had previously been unfortunate, unlucky, or unpopular during the course of their career upon the English throne, but for Marguerite the great misfortune was that she was unpopular from the start. England did not want a French Princess for her King—above all, she did not want a French Princess without a dowry.

Thus it happened that the fifteen-year-old girl had enemies before ever she had crossed the Channel to be married. Nor were these enemies confined to the lower orders; on the other hand, they were to be found among the greatest in the land.

Moved by her own personal ambition, perhaps the most bitter of these was Eleanor Cobham, the second wife of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. Eleanor had good cause to be jealous of this young rival, for so long as Henry VI. was kept unmarried her husband, Gloucester, remained the heir to his nephew's throne. Should anything happen—and things happened easily in those days—to the King, Eleanor Cobham would become Queen of England! On the other hand, should the King live long enough not only to marry, but to have an heir, then gone were the hopes of Gloucester!

As readers of English history know, before long

the Duchess of Gloucester was seized as a witch, being proved to have attempted to destroy the life of the King by sorcery, with the aid of a waxen image which was being gradually melted. As it melted, so was the life of Henry VI. expected to fade away.

Eleanor Cobham was degraded by being made to march three times through the City of London in her chemise, with a torch in her hand, in the month of November ! She was then sent as a prisoner for life to the Isle of Man. The Duke of Gloucester, however, still remained alive, free, and powerful ; moreover, he was the idol of the populace.

For fear of Gloucester, who was the ally of the Armagnacs in Guyenne, where he owned estates, it was determined to hurry on the proposed match. At the same time the Earl of Suffolk, who had a niece married to a member of the House of Foix, contrived to surrender to this rival of Armagnac the fiefs in Guyenne which belonged to the Duke. The peace party did not find themselves able, however, to work without great opposition, so great were still the interests of many of the English nobles in France, all of whom were determined to retain their fiefs, at no matter what price to the State in men or money. The prelates, however, headed by the Cardinal of Winchester, became more and more afraid of their pockets being touched if the war proceeded, and they accordingly backed up Suffolk vigorously in the matter of the young Marguerite d'Anjou.

The articles, however, of the marriage treaty made by Suffolk were shocking for England. He agreed to abandon all claims to the County of Maine and to Anjou—then held by English troops—giving them up

to René and his brother Charles, whom he had made Comte du Maine. As these provinces were not handed over to the King of France, the negotiators of the treaty hoped to save their faces in England ; moreover, they went through the farce of pretending that they did not yield the Sovereignty of the County of Maine, but only the usufruct. Further, as many English nobles held Crown fiefs in Maine, the treaty-makers demanded from France the revenue of Maine for ten years, in order to pay off these nobles in money value for their estates.

As the English holders of the Maine Crown fiefs saw only too plainly that, when once the English troops had been withdrawn, no revenue could be expected from French sources, Suffolk was greeted with a howl of execration when he returned to England after having signed the marriage treaty. From this time the death of the Earl of Suffolk was resolved upon by many—it was, indeed, likely to prove only a matter of time.

Thus under the most unfortunate circumstances did the beautiful young Marguerite land in England, to be married to Henry VI. at Titchfield Abbey in April 1445. She found universal hatred of her protector and sponsor, Suffolk, detestation of France, and enmity to a French Queen. Further, the country seemed to be on the verge of a revolution, and there was every probability that Gloucester, being supported by the war party, might replace her newly wedded husband on the English throne.

Her fears were, however, to prove unfounded, for in February 1446 the powerful prelates who were the enemies of Gloucester suddenly contrived his arrest,

and shortly afterwards he was found dead in the Tower of London.

No peace, however, was concluded with France, although the truce continued.

There were, of course, many in England who maintained that Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, had been murdered to prevent his attempting to seize the throne. And yet, if a crime had been committed, it was likely to prove unavailing, for there were living two other Dukes, descendants of Edward III., either of whom might lay claim to the Crown. The first of these was Edmund, Duke of Somerset, of the House of Lancaster, to which Henry VI. himself belonged; the other Richard, Duke of York, who descended through an elder branch than the King or Somerset on his mother's side; that is to say, from Lionel, Duke of Clarence.

On his father's side York also descended from Edward III., but from Edmund of Langley, a younger son than either the King or Somerset, both of whom were descendants of Edward's third son, John of Gaunt.

A grave event, likely to bring matters to a crisis, occurred shortly after the death of Gloucester—this was the decease of the old Cardinal Bishop of Winchester, the King's great-uncle and head of the peace party. For fifty years had this son of John of Gaunt been at the head of the English Church, and for a great part of that time he had been the most powerful man either in England or France. The Royalty of the House of Lancaster had owed its origin and maintenance in a large measure to the Church, and with the death of Cardinal Henry Beaufort its main support had disappeared.

Suffolk was a picturesque figure—a soldier who had fought for thirty-four years for his country, and, as other members of the family of De La Pole before him, had often reflected lustre upon its arms. His reputation for bravery and honour was untarnished, and he only sought his country's good in striving for the peace which, now that the Cardinal was dead, he could not secure.

A good story was told of Suffolk, that when, after fighting like a lion at Jargeau, and after the enemy had already forced the place, he found himself almost alone. He knew that he must yield, that indeed the place was already lost, when he found himself opposed to a French gentleman. Lowering his sword, he inquired of this gentleman, "Are you a Knight?" "No, my Seigneur." "Kneel, then, before me!" The Frenchman knelt, whereupon the Earl of Suffolk dubbed him Knight. "Now," said he, "I can surrender myself to you." For some time subsequently he remained a prisoner, and the enormous ransom that he was compelled to pay reduced him to poverty.

Now that the old Cardinal was dead, the crime of the death of the Duke of Gloucester, of which Henry Beaufort had been supposed guilty, was also fixed upon Suffolk, although none dared openly accuse him of it during his lifetime, and it seems improbable that the Duke had died of anything but long-seated disease, which had been brought to a climax by his arrest. Still, the accusation of poisoning was always made against some one in that day whenever any person of note died opportunely; and was not Suffolk the friend of the Queen? the ardent advocate of a peace by which, while the country gained, some of the nobles

would suffer? Unaffected by what his enemies thought or said, Suffolk, who was paramount with the King and the vivacious young French Queen, endeavoured, as soon as Winchester was dead, to make sure of the two Princes of the Blood-Royal nearest to the throne. Richard, Duke of York, who was Regent of France, he removed and sent to Ireland, while at the same time he sent Edmund, Duke of Somerset, who, as Lancastrian, he felt that he could depend upon, as Regent to France. Four years after the marriage of Marguerite, who still was for another four years to remain without an heir, the truce with France was coming to an end.

The Duke of Somerset wrote urgently to the English Parliament that he was liable to sudden attack, and that he required large reinforcements at once, or he would be lost.

Thinking that by refusing to vote they would damage Suffolk, the Parliament madly refused the required subsidy—which was equivalent to throwing away France for a matter of personal pique.

Such mad folly seems incredible, but not one penny would they vote, as they put it, for Suffolk, and thus left Somerset, his nominee in France, to shift for himself, and soon his troubles were very real, as the truce was broken (1449). The war began again, and English troops under the command of a Spanish officer named François de Surienne, who had according to treaty been ejected from Maine, were the chief cause of its breaking out anew, moreover of Brittany becoming involved in the quarrel against England. Normandy, under English rule, having declared herself unable to provide for the troops who,

under threats, had left Maine, the Aragonese de Surienne, who was a Knight of the Garter, went off and made war on his own account on Breton soil. He sacked the town of Fougères, where he and his starving English soldiers made an enormous booty, and there is little doubt but that Somerset, in Rouen, had connived at his action, although he disavowed any connection with the Spaniard.

The French armies, and those of Brittany, soon fell upon Normandy, vowing vengeance, not only upon the English, but the many Anglicised Frenchmen who lived in the Duchy. Dunois, aided by the Burgundians, commanded one army, and, with the Duc d'Alençon and the Comte de Saint-Pol as his lieutenants, invaded Upper Normandy. The Duc Jean V. de Bretagne and his brother, the Comte de Richemont, fell furiously upon Lower Normandy, while the inhabitants of Rouen themselves rose when the King, being joined even by René, the father of Marguerite, advanced upon that capital city. Somerset was then with the brave old Talbot, but they were shut up in the palace and the citadel, not having had sufficient troops to defend the walls.

It is a pitiable story! Bombarded unceasingly by Bureau's artillery, Somerset and Talbot could see all the inhabitants of Rouen changing the red cross of England for the white cross of France, and knew that there was no possibility of relief from their own country, which had denied them. Somerset had his wife and daughters with him—they fell at his feet, and he consented to treat with Charles VII. For the sake of his liberty, and that of those with him, he made a shameful bargain, paying a ransom, which

was not a large one, for himself, but by treaty abandoning the whole of the towns on the Lower Seine, including Honfleur at its mouth, to Charles. Then he himself retired to Caen, while giving up Talbot as a hostage for the surrender of the towns.

Some of the towns refused to be bound by Somerset's shameful surrender. Harfleur fought on bravely for a long time, the English defenders vainly crying to Somerset to return and aid them, as also did those of Honfleur. Talbot was meanwhile dragged about with the French army, and bitter indeed must have been the feelings of the old Earl of Shrewsbury as he saw city after city fall, almost within sight of the coasts of that England that refused help—so as to spite Suffolk!

And yet in England all the misfortunes of this campaign of 1449-50—a campaign in which Normandy, which had on purpose been left helpless and so betrayed to the enemy, was lost—were laid to the account of the unhappy Suffolk. He was attacked in the Commons by a humble address to the King. They said, absurdly, that he wished to make of his son King of England, and for that reason had called in the French, the friends of the Queen, to aid in selling England to France, and to René, the Queen's father.

It was true that Suffolk had married his eldest son to a daughter of Somerset, who, York being excluded, stood in the direct Lancastrian succession; but how absolutely without reason was this argument that the Queen's best friend was seeking to supplant her!

Any stick does, however, to beat a dog with, and

therefore, although Suffolk showed in defending himself, how his whole life, and that of many of his relatives who had fallen, had been in the service of his country, they insisted upon calling him a traitor.

It was in vain that, by banishing him for five years, Marguerite endeavoured to save the life of her faithful friend.

Before retiring to the country he made a desperate effort to save the north of France, sending out a brave soldier, named Thomas Kyriel, to Cherbourg with three thousand men. Had Kyriel, who showed great ability with his small force, been but able to win a good battle, Suffolk might yet have been saved; but, after several small successes and the capture of an important town, he found himself hemmed in on every side at Fermigny on April 15, 1450.

The battle which ensued, and which was gallantly contested by the small force of English, may be considered to have rung the death-knell for England in the north of France.

With the Comte de Richemont attacking him in front, and the Comte de Clermont in rear, Kyriel and his gallant men fought with the courage of despair. All was in vain, the English were exterminated! Nearly four thousand of them remained dead upon the field, while a thousand who survived, many of them wounded, were made prisoners.

Shortly after this, while London was opening her gates to the rebel Jack Cade, at the head of his army of the men of Kent, Somerset repeated his performances of Rouen. At the prayers of his wife he surrendered Caen, a town which belonged to the Duke



MARGUERITE OF ANJOU

of York, to the French. He left Normandy for ever, while the last act in the drama was completed by the bombardment and reduction of Cherbourg by Jean Bureau and his brother (August 1450).

Thus, thirty-five years after the bold Henry V., the second of the Lancastrian Kings, had recaptured for England her old Duchy of Normandy, a French King, Charles VII., found himself the absolute ruler of the ruined Province.

Meanwhile, the unhappy friend of Marguerite d'Anjou had met his doom. After assembling around himself all his friends and avowing his innocence, Suffolk embarked in a small ship.

The sailors on board, at whose instigation is not exactly known, held a mock trial upon the Earl, and clumsily decapitated him by twelve blows with a rusty sword!

CHAPTER VI

Two Jealous Princes

1435—1453

THE King of England yet remained Duc de Guyenne, and England still held Guyenne, a large part of the old Aquitaine, in the south, and notably the great city of Bordeaux, which was more English than the English themselves. For, since the time when the Black Prince had preferred Guyenne to England as his place of residence, Bordeaux, by her wine commerce, had mainly lived by English trade.

The French armies released from Normandy were, however, sent down to the country of the Foix and Armagnacs, whom, with Albret, it was endeavoured to enlist in the pleasing task of spoiling the English of their last French possessions.

For three hundred years, however, the English had been absolute masters of that part of France, which had, moreover, been very well treated. The English drank much wine, they enriched the country; it was not likely, if the French became its owners, that they would drink half so much! So the inhabitants of Guyenne remained loyal, and thus it was not without a good deal of hard fighting that the Gascons who supported England were subdued.

In order eventually to gain his ends Charles VII. found himself compelled to employ, not rigour, but kindness.

His soldiers were ordered to pay for everything they took, while such advantageous promises were made to Bordeaux and Bayonne that eventually these important places, both faithful to England, being left unaided, opened their gates to the French King.

While in England Marguerite as yet remained childless, the Duke of York was now claiming the succession to the Crown, and the Wars of the Roses beginning. Those of the York party made great capital of the loss of the old English possessions of Aquitaine, which had first been joined to England when, in 1152, Henry II. (Plantagenet), Comte d'Anjou, had married the Duchess Eleanor, the divorced wife of Louis VII. of France.

So as to paint matters in the worst light, the Yorkists publicly declared that, with Aquitaine, England had lost three Archbishoprics, thirty-four Bishoprics, fifteen Counties, two hundred Baronies, and over a thousand Captaincies. The Yorkists, moreover, falsely declared that the perfidious Duke of Somerset had sold Calais to the Duc de Bourgogne. The first rising of Richard, Duke of York, was, however, only made with the object of declaring himself heir to the English throne, not actually to claim it. It came to nothing, and he swore fidelity to Henry VI. at St. Paul's.

This was the moment that the young Queen Marguerite selected to prove herself not French, but as English as her husband. She determined to recapture Guyenne from the French, of whose dominion the Gascons were indeed already tired. A conspiracy

of the inhabitants of the south of France, in which those of Bordeaux figured prominently, sent a deputation to Henry VI. to ask for aid, and this aid, declared the daughter of René, must be accorded.

Accordingly, in the month of October 1452 a fleet was sent off which carried an English force under the command of the fiery old Talbot, then eighty years of age. Talbot landed in safety at a place called Soulac, and, the people aiding him, took a town garrisoned with French troops. Then, on October 23, he marched triumphantly into Bordeaux, the people of which city delivered over the garrison of King Charles into the brave old General's hands.

Talbot held Bordeaux and the surrounding country until the following summer, and the probability is that he might have retained the city indefinitely but for his own valorous imprudence. Three French armies having come to endeavour to recapture Guyenne, one of them was besieging the town of Châtillon. The attackers had entrenched themselves in a large and well-fortified camp, which was moreover well supplied with artillery, under Jean Bureau, with him being the old warlike freebooter Chabannes.

Talbot, with all the impetuosity of a young man of twenty, and boiling with rage, left Bordeaux and marched to the attack. Disdaining the enemy's three hundred cannons, clad in a red velvet cloak, which made him conspicuous, the old warrior rode about on a cob in front of the fortified lines. Of his eight thousand men many fell at the first discharge, but he pushed onwards with his standard, which he was determined to plant within the entrenchments. The

enemy, under Jean de Bueil, made a flank attack upon Talbot's forces, as, checked by the artillery fire, they were striving vainly to storm the earthworks. A cannon-shot tore the standard from the old man's hand, but he was only the more furious, the more determined to show these rascally Frenchmen, whom he knew so well, how Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, despised them. While persisting, swearing, and cheering on his men the gallant old commander fell, struck by a cannon-ball. He was not dead, however, and the battle surged on over his prostrate form, which was captured by the French, recaptured by the English. To friend or enemy it was of equal importance to save his life, to the latter if but for his ransom. At length, in the press of the hand-to-hand fighting, some soldier, it is said, accidentally struck old Talbot in the throat with a dagger; he may have risen to his knees at the time, or even to his feet, but the blow was mortal.

The English were forced back, and when eventually Talbot's old herald, who had served with him for forty years, was asked to recognise him, he found his face so disfigured that he could not do so. It was, according to the chronicler, Mathieu de Coucy, only by feeling in his dead leader's mouth for the vacancy of a tooth which he knew to be missing that the herald was certain that he was kneeling over his beloved master's body.

Then, with much lamentation, the old officer of arms said that it was time for him to give back the tabard of Talbot that he had worn for so many years. Weeping bitterly, the herald took off the coat of arms with which he was attired and respectfully

spread it over the shattered form of the hero whom he had served so faithfully and loved so well.

Talbot's defeat at Châtillon on July 17, 1453, cost the English four thousand men; but, for all that, Gascony was not subdued nor Bordeaux taken. It required a fourth Royal army to subdue the country, and even then, although every Gascon found arms in hand fighting for England was decapitated, the country folk would not yield. Bordeaux, garrisoned with English and Gascons, although besieged by the whole of the four armies of Charles VII., held out nobly until the third week in October 1453. Then, being closed in on the sea-side by Dutch ships hired from Burgundy, by ships from Brittany, ships from the rival town of La Rochelle, and Spanish ships from Castile, there was absolutely no further chance for the city to be revictualled from the sea. The neighbouring towns had been captured one by one by Charles, and at length the garrison and the inhabitants of Bordeaux were worn out by starvation. But still they held out, as Charles, who wished to make a bloody example of the French rebels in the town, would make them no promises of mercy. Severe sickness among his own forces compelled the French King, however, to show more clemency.

When he offered to be content with a levy of a hundred thousand crowns on the city, and the banishment of twenty of its aristocratic inhabitants, while the English were to be allowed to depart freely by sea, the terms were accepted.

Bordeaux surrendered on October 19, just a year after Talbot had been welcomed there so gaily, and, while the town was deprived of many of its ancient

privileges, the greatest blow which it was dealt for the time being was the loss of the English trade.

England, however, had now lost both Normandy and Aquitaine, and, though she retained Calais until, a hundred years later, it was lost in the reign of Queen Mary, her Sovereignty of France was a thing of the past.

Six days before the fall of Bordeaux Queen Marguerite at last gave birth to a son (October 13, 1453). He was christened Edward; but even the birth of her child could not counterbalance the shock of the blow to the young and ambitious Queen or to her subjects.

Shortly after the birth of his heir Henry VI. became imbecile for the first time, remaining speechless, and paying not the slightest attention to the lords who vainly implored him to sign a commission of regency. The state of Marguerite was then indeed deplorable. She was almost penniless, the Duke of York, who for the time being had gained the upper hand in the civil war, had put the Duke of Somerset in the Tower, and she, a French woman in England, appeared friendless and deserted. But did that brave woman despair? No, Marguerite, the daughter of Anjou, never despaired, but fought on valiantly for another twenty years against all odds, until she herself was taken prisoner and her son cruelly murdered at the close of the fateful battle of Tewkesbury.

In that same year her husband, being a confirmed imbecile, had died in the Tower, probably being murdered. Thus, all her hopes being lost, it is indeed doubtful if Marguerite was able to keep up her courage during the four long years of imprison-

ment to which she was subjected before she was ransomed and sent back to France, to end her days in solitary inactivity and poverty in Anjou.

There is an old saying that one man's meat is another man's poison, and another states, inversely, that it is an ill wind which blows good to no one. While England and England's Queen were thus the victims of a cruel fate, there was one who, through no particular merits of his own, was the gainer by their misfortunes. This lucky person was the ruler of Burgundy and half a dozen other large States, some of which were giving him cause for a good deal of anxiety. When an intimate of Philippe le Bon, Duc de Bourgogne, heard that the English under Talbot had landed in Guyenne, he is said to have exclaimed, "Would to God that they were also as well established in Rouen and all Normandy! Were it not for their presence in Bordeaux we should have had now to be looking out for our own skins." He was talking at the time to one of that self-seeking Picardian family of Croy, of whom for so long the Duc made his principal advisers; and he spoke the truth. The Duc himself also said to this Croy that, were it not for the obstacle caused by Bordeaux, the armies of the King of France would certainly have been turned on him.

Although, in accordance with the provisions of the reconciliation of 1435 between France and Burgundy at Arras, Burgundian soldiers had recently been aiding Charles VII. against the English in Normandy, the Duc de Bourgogne remained entirely English at heart. His present wife Isabelle, a woman of intrigue, was Lancastrian on her mother's side, her father, King

Juan I. of Portugal, having married a daughter of John of Gaunt. Later on the Duchess married her son, Charles the Bold, to an Englishwoman, Margaret of York, and Marie, the daughter of Charles the Bold, married the Emperor Maximilian, who also had Lancastrian blood in his veins. The connection between Burgundy and England was, it will thus be seen, one that was not easily to be broken, and by it even the great Emperor Charles V. was, fifty years later, to be born with a large share of Lancastrian blood in his veins.

This connection, and, above all, the latent attachment of Philippe de Bourgogne to England, was a source of constant irritation to Charles VII. This King would have liked to have been able to keep the Duc under, by asserting his Suzerainty over this cadet of the old Royal line of France. But what power had he to do so? Not only was Philippe, even if called Duc, practically as big a King as himself, but at the reconciliation of Arras the old Suzerain rights of France for the French Provinces held by Burgundy had been declared as no longer existent. Philippe had then refused homage to Charles, while, in a patronising manner, accepting his humble apologies for the murder of his father, Jean Sans Peur. It was, felt Charles, most galling. Was it not enough that this hated cousin should be far richer than himself, owing to the dues that he drew from his countries of Flanders and Holland? but that he should be feudally independent, while ruling States like Burgundy and Franche Comté, lying geographically in France, was intolerable. The greatest cause of annoyance between the two rulers lay, however, at this time not in matters

concerning States or provinces lying geographically in France, but in those outside France. The great Belgian commercial cities, Bruges, Liège, and Ghent, for instance, although situated in the heart of Burgundian Flanders, were always appealing to France, to the arbitration of the King, or that of the Parliament of Paris. And France would not let them alone, but encouraged them against the Duc. Charles seems to have asserted from time to time some sort of claim to feudal Suzerainty over them, which, although shadowy, was welcomed by these Flemings, since it backed them up against their master, or he who considered that he ought to be their absolute master, the Duc de Bourgogne.

There was likewise a great sympathy between Hainaut and a very large part of the west and south of what is now called Belgium, and France, owing to the similarity of their language. The inhabitants were called Walloons, from the old Latin Wallus, or Gallus, a Gaul, and the Walloon language was a mixture of Latin and Gallic words that greatly resembled French.

The semi-independent towns of Bruges and Ghent, which hated each other, yet both detested the Duc, whose grandfather, Philippe le Hardi, had married both Flanders and Franche-Comté in the person of Marguerite, the heiress of the Comte Louis de Mâle. They hated him principally as being the ruler of Holland, which his father, Jean Sans Peur, had obtained by marrying Marguerite, daughter of Albert, Count of Holland.

Yet many of the Flemish-speaking inhabitants of Flanders also loathed the Walloons, especially the

Walloon nobility—they mixed them up in their aversions with the English, whom they hated likewise, for they were good haters all round !

And the causes of this hatred had been, mainly commercial. The Flemings, in 1436, had complained that the English ill-treated their merchants, and commenced moreover to start manufactures of their own.

They accordingly then besieged the English in Calais, vowing to wipe them out, when neither did the Dutch ships help them by sea nor the Walloon nobility by land. Bruges and Ghent, subsequently rising alternately against the Duc, did not, however, back each other up, but were crushed in turn, for want of coalition. Occasionally these quarrelsome cities made war upon each other. Bruges became furious, likewise, with the inhabitants of Zealand and Holland, because these Dutchmen aided the English with supplies, when they landed on the Flemish coasts and seized children, whom they held to ransom. The Brugeois freely murdered Dutch Admirals and officers, when they saw them thus lending a friendly neutrality to the English.

It suited the Duc, at times, to keep all of these troublesome subjects of his in order by aiding one powerful city against the other ; indeed, his only salvation seemed to be in keeping them divided, as, united, they would have been far too strong for him. Moreover, it pleased him, no doubt, to help these " dogs," who sought to embarrass him by saying they owed allegiance to France, to eat each other up. As a matter of fact, they wished to own allegiance to neither France nor the Empire, which latter claimed Suzerainty over some of the Duc's possessions, and only trifled

with France in order to annoy their ruler. The Duc himself was often in a quandary owing to these supposed feudal rights, and yet there was this difference between them, that, whereas France also laid claim to rights of jurisdiction, the only claim made by the Holy Roman Empire was that of homage.

To put the matter in a nutshell, however, France, or rather Charles VII., made himself particularly obnoxious in various ways, making all sorts of claims having to do with coinage, taxation, or duties on Burgundian wines in the French Provinces, and instigating the Flemish ones against their Sovereign.

If Charles irritated Philippe thus, and in other ways, as when he sent all the *écorcheurs* under Louis the Dauphin to Switzerland through Burgundian territory, the Duc knew how to be irritating in turn. For instance, as already mentioned, he was directly the cause of bringing back the Duc d'Orléans from England, which step was to cost Charles a pretty penny; and then, again, he could irritate Charles through his magnificent Order of the Golden Fleece. Of this Order Philippe was the Sovereign, and there was not a Prince in Europe but considered himself highly honoured if allowed to join it. Charles had nothing of the kind in France, and felt himself continually humiliated at the knowledge that the Duc Philippe had, through the Golden Fleece, obtained such immense power as to be able to hold so many of the greatest Princes and nobles under his thumb. The magnificence of the chapters, fêtes, and tourneys of the Golden Fleece was unbounded; moreover, it was the supreme Court of Honour of Europe. Any member who should offend its powerful Sovereign was

apt to have his name struck off the lists of its Knights—a lasting disgrace. Some Princes there were, moreover, of European countries, such as Denmark and Sweden, who sued in vain for admission. Thus the Order was an immense power in the hands of the Duke of Burgundy.

While there were so many reasons to make Philippe and Charles remain at constant variance, one there was in France who did not see in the matter eye to eye with the King. This was the King's son, Louis.

The Dauphin, who at the age of sixteen had sought to depose his father, continued to clamour in vain for greater power in the Kingdom, and for more possessions. He found himself thwarted by a courageous, honest, and able noble, Pierre de Brézé, Grand Sénéchal de Normandie, and by Agnès Sorel. Although, after he himself came to the throne, Louis XI. took Pierre de Brézé into his favour, at the time that we are writing of he endeavoured to procure his assassination, but failed. His failure was caused by Antoine de Chabannes. Louis had promised to this old *écorcheur*, who had become Comte de Dammartin, ten thousand golden crowns to help him in the matter of the seizing and killing of Brézé, in order that he might himself seize the reins of Government. Chabannes agreed to the plot, but relented, and it was discovered. Louis was then again exiled to his province of Dauphiné. This was in 1447, and he never saw his father again. Having arrived in Dauphiné, while showing a wonderful activity in the reconstitution of what was practically an independent State, Louis turned his eyes towards Burgundy, and entered into the closest relations with his father's enemy, the Duc Philippe.

In Dauphiné Louis remained for ten years, and, after his first year of residence there, he would appear to have planned an alliance with Philippe, by which they should together invade France, imprison the King, and seize the Kingdom. For of this dutiful son it may well be said that he was nothing if not consistent in his ideas. These became more evident when, after the recapture of Normandy, he entered into relation with the great Norman lords and prelates, with a view to their handing over the Duchy into his hands.

CHAPTER VII

Louis, Margaret, and Charlotte 1436 and Later

LOUIS the Dauphin was married for the first time, when a boy of thirteen, to a frail little Princess who was aged only twelve. This young girl was Margaret, daughter of James I. of Scotland, a Prince who had had the misfortune to be the prisoner of his cousins, Henry IV. and Henry V. of England, for no less than eighteen years. During the latter part of that period the young Scotch King had accompanied his jailer, or detainer, Henry V., to the wars in France, and fought with him against the French on several occasions, although many of his own Scotch subjects were fighting on the other side.

The young daughter of James I. had for mother Joanna Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, and thus was, like her father, King James, descended from the Lancastrian stock.

The girl Margaret, when torn from her Scottish home at such an early age, to be sent to France to be married, had a very narrow escape of falling, as her father had done, into the hands of the English while at sea. She barely escaped in time into the harbour of La Rochelle from the pursuit of the English

war-ships, and was married at Tours on the 24th day of June, 1436.

From the first this child—too young to be a wife—was much beloved by Charles VII. and his wife, Marie d'Anjou, but the boy Dauphin cared little for his bride. As Margaret grew older, and it was discovered that she suffered from some female ailment which rendered her incapable of bearing children, Louis grew positively to dislike the poor young Princess, charming and amiable as was her nature. Being thus thrown back upon her own resources, Margaret became addicted to the writing of verse, the taste for which she had inherited from her father, who was murdered at Perth less than a year after her marriage. In her love for everything poetical, Margaret even once went so far as to kiss the cheek of the poet Alain Chartier, whom she saw asleep upon a bench. She explained her conduct, which was not approved of by her husband, by saying that it was "not the man that she had kissed, but the precious mouth from which had fallen so many *bons mots*."

As the gentle but very extravagant Margaret counted little in the life of the active and quick-brained Dauphin, but little attention need be paid to the report, credited by many, when she died. This was that she had been poisoned by her husband, but the fact is that she died from the effects of a chill, which, having gone to her lungs, carried her off after but a week's illness at Sarry-le-Château, when she was only twenty years of age. History has always spoken of this young Scotch girl with a tender regret, chiefly on account of the disgust which she expressed of life when quitting



MARGARET OF SCOTLAND, FIRST WIFE OF LOUIS XI. 1425-45

it. "Talk no more to me of this world—I am sick of it," are said to have been the last words of the first wife of Louis XI. The fact of her having given vent to them, after nine years of marriage to one of the greatest Princes in Christendom, gives cause for wonder that there can be found, even nowadays, writers who devote themselves to the task of rehabilitating the memory of that Prince!

It was in August 1444 that Margaret of Scotland breathed her last, and in 1447, during the truce with England, that her widowed husband was sent back to his Principality of Dauphiné. It was just about a hundred years since this had been left by its last independent ruler, the Dauphin de Viennois, to Philip VI., the first of the Valois kings, and his son Jean, who became the first Dauphin of France.

But little had changed in Dauphiné since then; the country still contained vast forests in which Louis used to hunt; it still was looked upon as a fief of the Empire, still was the *jardin de délices* of many rich lay and ecclesiastical Seigneurs, who, according to ancient statutes, enjoyed the privilege of waging private wars. Moreover, there still remained open old territorial questions, such as a quarrel, which had never been settled, as to the boundaries between Dauphiné and the Duchy of Savoy. To upset all ancient rights became the object of Louis, while substituting for them his own authority, as paramount over all of "his subjects," as he termed the inhabitants. He found more difficulty with the churchmen than with the lay Barons, although his iron will broke down all resistance in time, and one of his first actions was absolutely to forbid all waging of private wars.

The freeholds, which, until his time, had been exempt from taxation, next attracted his attention, and Louis soon made them contribute to his subsidies. The nobles were compelled to vow him fidelity and feudal service, under severe pains and penalties for disobedience; but from the prelates this young man of twenty-four found the most determined resistance. This opposition he broke down, while suppressing all ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The old Archbishop of Vienne had hitherto enjoyed temporal powers over the city and County of Vienne, but Louis forced this prelate to share them with himself, while the temporalities of several other recalcitrant Bishops were sequestrated altogether. He exacted homage from the chapter of a cathedral, and forbade all churchmen from proceeding to the Pontifical Court of Rome without his sanction. Some who were going to Rome in spite of his interdict were arrested on the way, brought back, and punished.

While thus showing the greatest determination in binding all of the aristocratic classes to his will, the Dauphin showed benevolence to those bourgeois of the towns and other members of the third estate who were willing to pay him for his favours. This was a policy which he likewise pursued after he ascended the throne of France. The Jews in Dauphiné were numerous and ill-treated, although rich and intellectual. Upon these Louis conferred privileges, and punished those who borrowed money from them and defrauded them. Naturally, however, Louis made the Jews contribute towards his own exchequer. A university was established by him at Valence, to replace or supplement that already existing at Grenoble, which

he found in a far from flourishing condition. The better to know his Principality, the Dauphin went ferreting about everywhere, often making an excuse of his hunting expeditions to question the inn-keepers and peasantry as to the actual state of affairs in their immediate neighbourhood.

The energy of the Dauphin was indeed wonderful, with the result that, before long, he knew every nook and cranny of the country, and everything that went on among high and low. With the Duc de Savoie he came frequently into contact, and settled the question of the boundaries to his own satisfaction. Likewise, he found time to meet and fall in love with Charlotte, the youngest daughter of Louis, Duc de Savoie, and Anne de Lusignan, Queen of Cyprus, whose beauty was great. Having raised a small army of five *compagnies d'ordonnance*, after the style of those of France, and a number of companies of crossbowmen, he thought, however, seriously of waging war upon Savoy, and even obtained from Pope Nicolas V. a Bull which conferred the Duchy upon him.

Presumably, however, it was love which caused the Dauphin to change his mind about this matter; as, instead of going to war with Louis of Savoy, he became his ally, and asked him for the hand of the daughter whose charms he so much admired. Louis the Dauphin did not, however, forget to ask, at the same time, for a dowry of two hundred thousand golden crowns, which was agreed to, and a marriage contract signed with Charlotte in February 1451.

The news of this approaching marriage of his son alarmed and angered Charles VII. exceedingly, and he sent messenger after messenger to forbid it.

Louis, however, whose passions were inflamed by occasional visits to his black-eyed lady-love at Chambéry, was determined to have his own way. Each time he found her more attractive, and he became resolved that not all the might of France should stand in the way of his second union.

While dallying with this beautiful daughter of Savoy and the titular Queen of Cyprus and Jerusalem, Louis was not forgetting his ambitious schemes, and, with her father, was arranging a plan whereby, the mountain passes of the Alps being thrown open to his army, he should invade and annex Genoa, from which French troops had just been ejected. At the same time he was plotting with this Duke of Savoy, whose mother had been a Princess of the ambitious House of Burgundy, further schemes for their mutual aggrandisement, which aimed at nothing less than their division of the Duchy of Milan, which belonged by right of descent to the Duc d'Orléans.

Again, with a view to imposing a kind of protection over the Pontifical States in France, the energetic Dauphin purchased the Principality of Monaco from the family of Grimaldi. The sum agreed upon for the site of Monte Carlo and its surrounding possessions was fifteen thousand golden crowns, which Louis forgot to pay.

Meanwhile the Dauphin was not forgetting his inside policy or the affairs of France, where he was seeking to undermine his father's influence in every direction. He received, however, a rebuff from the Estates of the County of Agen, situated in the vicinity of Albret, Foix, and Armagnac, which body he summoned to pay him a subsidy, and to withdraw

themselves from the King, to give themselves to him. A rebuff here or there mattered but little to this indomitable young Prince, whose intrigues went so far as to endeavour not only to suborn those most faithful to Charles VII., but to fill the most important temporal and ecclesiastical offices of the State with unworthy creatures of his own.

Among others whose good-will he attempted to purchase was Agnès Sorel, to whom he sent valuable gifts; but with her he had no success. With Jacques Cœur he was more successful, with the result that the right-hand man of the father, Charles, secretly transferred his allegiance to the son, Louis, and remitted him various loans.

Having obtained by threats and bribes the succession to the province of Auvergne from the Bishop of Albi, Louis was intending to make of his marriage to the lovely Charlotte of Savoy but a stepping-stone to the establishment of a large Principality on both sides of the Alps. Charles VII. was aware of his traitorous son's designs, and therefore, being determined to prevent the marriage at any price, threatened his son when he would not listen to prayers. Louis snapped his fingers at his father's threats, and easily persuaded his prospective father-in-law to do the same. He determined to risk everything, and to marry the attractive girl for whose possession he was pining, and before long proceeded to Chambéry for the purpose.

Charles VII., at the same time, was sending his King-of-Arms to the Duc de Savoie to stop the ceremony, who arrived at Chambéry the day before it was to take place.

By a trick, the King-of-Arms was detained and prevented from gaining access to the ruler of Savoy for the whole of that day, and on the morrow he only contrived to arrive at the Ducal Castle in time to perceive, from afar, the Dauphin and his bride, in gala attire, entering the chapel for the marriage service.

Thus was Louis the Dauphin successful in gaining the wife of his choice on March 8, 1451. When Charles VII. heard how he had been flouted he became furious with rage, stopped his allowances to the Dauphin, got ready an army, and, marching with it to the south, prepared to chastise his rebellious son. This son, however, also put his army in the field and remained defiant, while sending embassies to his father, by which he refused to divest himself of the services of certain Seigneurs, whom Charles VII. characterised as "ribalds, traitors, and evil dogs, causes of the Dauphin's detestable government."

The arms of the father and the son did not come into actual collision. Charles, however, overawed Savoy, and compelled the Duc to enter into alliance with him against his newly made son-in-law. When, at length, the King had retired again to the north, the amiable Dauphin advanced upon his father-in-law. To punish the Duc de Savoie for having entered into alliance with his father, Louis invaded the province of Bresse and wasted it horribly with fire and sword.

CHAPTER VIII

The Triumph of Burgundy

1453

BEFORE Louis the Dauphin had obtained his heart's desire, and taken a second wife, in spite of his father's efforts to prevent him, he lost a consistent enemy, while Charles VII. lost a faithful mistress and France a friend.

Agnès Sorel—the Dame de Beauté—died at Jumièges on February 9, 1450, and, while her heart was buried in the Abbey of that place, her body was interred in the Collegiate Church at Loches. According to some, the amiable Agnès died as the result of an accouchement, but, as in the case of his first wife, Louis was accused of being her poisoner; moreover, Jacques Cœur, the King's silversmith, the man by whose skill the finances of the Kingdom had been made to run so smoothly, earned the reputation of having been an accessory to the crime.

Jacques, who had many enemies and rivals, had nevertheless contrived to do well for his relatives; for some of whom he procured high ecclesiastical preferment and for others estates. Not long after the decease of the King's mistress an Italian, the treasurer

of Toulouse, who was related to the great Florentine family of Medicis, contrived to supplant him with the King, at the same time as, with many of the Seigneurs and other Italian merchants, he aroused the people against the King's silversmith. The accusation made against Jacques Cœur was that he caused French money to leave the Kingdom, and, further, that he supplied arms to the Saracens in his trade to the East. This last accusation was very probably true, but whether the further one that he dealt in white slaves with the Turks was true or no was doubtful.

The Turks, under Mohammed II., were just then besieging Constantinople, thus accusations of this kind were damning in the extreme. The fact of his relations with the Dauphin, which had become known to the King, was in any case alone enough to ruin Cœur, who was tried and sentenced on the very day that Constantinople fell, May 29, 1453. He escaped, however, and left the Kingdom in one of his own galleys, and found protection under the Spanish Pope, Alfonso Borgia, who reigned as Calixtus III.

This Pope made of Jacques Cœur his Lord High Admiral, and, while he continued his trade with Syria, he was also employed to fight against the Turks. Never, perhaps, has a man had a more extraordinary career than this silversmith of Charles VII., and after his death, which took place at Cyprus, Louis XI. acknowledged his benefits to France—and to himself—by having the judgment against him expunged from the annals of the Parliament.

The jealousy was continuing between France and Burgundy, but the intervention of the English, under Talbot, gave the Duc Philippe the opportunity he

desired of crushing his rebellious subjects of Ghent without being disturbed by active French interference.

Charles had, however, sought to interfere, and, by embarrassing the Duc while his hands were tied, to compel him to sell back the towns which he held in the north of France, in the neighbourhood of the river Somme. He sent the Comte de Saint-Pol from his large domains in Picardy to make certain promises of assistance to the men of Ghent. Saint-Pol, however, who never could run straight, was afraid that his independence in Picardy would be attacked if Charles should recover the Somme cities. Therefore, in an arbitration which he was asked to make between the citizens of Ghent and the Duc Philippe, he decided in favour of Burgundy, an arbitration which only increased their discontent, which suited the Duc Philippe, who was only waiting for the rebels to rise in arms in order to wipe them out.

Further French Ambassadors soon arrived upon the scene, when the people of Ghent distrusted their proffered services, and, disdaining intervention, rose in open revolt—forty-five thousand rebels marching out from the city against the Duc de Bourgogne.

This latter was greatly aided by two English captains in the service of Ghent. These misled the unfortunate insurgents, by informing them that the Duc had but few men with him, and they moreover deserted the rebels as soon as they found themselves in the presence of Philippe, with a large force of men-at-arms, and archers from Picardy. A battle took place at Gavre, not far from Ghent, which was for a time doubtful; but when an artillery waggon full of powder blew up in the middle of the ranks of the bold

infantry soldiers of Ghent they were thrown into confusion. While the Burgundians were still hesitating before the ranks of the Flemings armed with long pikes, the Duc himself, who was clad in armour all inlaid with gold, gave an example of courage to his followers, leading a charge into a mass of the insurgents where, standing with their backs to the river Escaut, they were determined to sell their lives dearly. He was followed by his son Charles, Comte de Charolais, afterwards Charles the Bold, and was immediately in the greatest danger of his life. Philippe's horse was wounded in four places, and he himself surrounded by the enemy, when he was rescued by his followers.

Thousands of the army of Ghent were driven into the Escaut, where the archers of the Duc stood upon the banks and smashed in their skulls with maces as they endeavoured to struggle to the shores. Philippe le Bon gained a complete victory, twenty thousand of his Flemish subjects remaining dead upon the field or in the river. It is said that he himself wept at the horrible sight while surveying the piteous scene on the morrow, when the women of Ghent were searching among the dead for their husbands, brothers, or lovers.

Whether Philippe wept or no, marching triumphantly into the city, he declared Ghent deprived of all her ancient privileges. No longer was she to reign as a Sovereign city over all the surrounding towns and villages ; she was reduced to the rank of an ordinary town, while the Duke's Herald, Fleece of Gold, put her banner in a bag and carried it off for ever.

The Duc and his Burgundian nobles now felt themselves puffed up with pride. As Comte de Flandre, he had reduced his Flemish subjects to abject submission. Neither the King nor the Emperor troubled him now—they had better leave Philippe alone and mind their own business! No claims from the former concerning French rights in France or Flanders, no claims from the latter concerning feudal rights in Luxembourg would be listened to. Woe to either Charles or Frederick should they seek to molest the Duc de Bourgogne; they would find him ready, and only waiting to serve them as he had served the men of Ghent!

The Courts of these sorry monarchs were for the time being indeed sunk into insignificance in comparison to that of the rich and mighty ruler of Burgundy, the Sovereign of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

He endeavoured to dazzle the world with his magnificence, and early in 1454 gave such a wonderful series of fêtes and galas at the town of Lille as the world had never hitherto seen or heard of. Fabulous was the expense of these festivities, which cost more than would have done a prolonged war.

During the continuance of the feasts wonderful spectacles were to be seen between the courses, every extravagance that could be imagined being introduced. Theatrical representations, bears, wild boars, even a naked woman guarded by a chained lion, all figured upon the scene. Upon one dining-table was to be seen a cathedral, with glass windows and a clock-tower with a clock which chimed, and choristers who sang within. Upon another dining-table were erected no

less than nine different stages, upon each of which was some theatrical performance. One of these consisted, in appearance, of a huge pie, within which twenty-eight persons played upon musical instruments. Upon a third table were to be seen represented the adventures of Jason going in search of the Golden Fleece, killing wild animals and subduing dragons. Meanwhile, around the hall wherein were seated the numberless *convives*, marched an elephant, caparisoned in silk and gold, with a tower upon its back. Upon the battlements of this tower a young woman, in mourning robes, with dishevelled hair and in tears, wrung her hands piteously and excited universal compassion. She represented the Holy Church made captive by the Turks at Constantinople, and her appearance was intended to signify that Philippe le Bon, as a new Crusader, intended to march against the Turks for her release. All of the Knights present, and they were hundreds in number, swore to follow the Duc to Constantinople for her rescue, each one striving to swear by some more extraordinary oath than the other.

Some of these oaths were merely grotesque, as when one Seigneur swore by the pheasant, and another never to dine on a Tuesday. Other vows not only verged upon the indelicate, but exceeded it, and as the Duc himself, for very decency's sake, had at length to put an end to them, we will not reproduce them here, and for the more reason that there were none of them fulfilled.

In addition to all these feasts, there were to be seen daily tourneys, made not only the more remarkable by the splendour of the Knights, but the brilliancy

of the ladies who encouraged their partisans and rewarded the victors. Often in the course of the knightly contests these ladies became so excited that, in the same manner as men's hats are in Spain thrown into the bull-ring to-day, they divested themselves of articles of their clothing and hurled them down into the lists. At the end of the tourneys the fair ones often looked at each other in laughing shame, as they realised that they remained with dishevelled locks and shoulders all bare.

To describe longer the fêtes at Lille would be tedious, and moreover unnecessary, as enough has already been said to show the height of glory to which the House of Burgundy had attained at this period. While the Duc was beginning to think of requesting the Emperor to make him a King, many thought that he would go farther, and himself replace the Emperor on the Imperial throne.

In an Europe that was so thoroughly disunited, Burgundy was, for the moment, the Power that counted most, and, with the existing rivalry between Charles VII. and his son, there is no doubt but that Philippe could have gone far indeed, save for one cause. This cause, which held him back, was the same that set France free, the civil war of the Roses in England. Whether York or Lancaster came out uppermost probably mattered little to Burgundy, which was thoroughly English independent of faction or relationships. Further, Edward IV. of York showed himself quite as anxious as any Lancastrian for Burgundian support. But with Lancaster and York at war, France remained with hands untied, and thus a constant menace on the flank of Burgundy.

CHAPTER IX

Circassian Slaves and Social Life

THE Court of Philippe de Bourgogne was, as has been seen, the most brilliant in Europe, and its master the most prodigal of men. The vice and dissipation of its master were imitated by the Seigneurs who flocked to his Court, while attempting to vie with one another in extravagance. The better to secure these to his interests, the Duc closed his eyes to their dissoluteness and follies, while often rewarding them with the hands of rich heiresses, titles, and grants of money. What Versailles became to Europe in the reigns of Louis XIV. and his successor, Louis XV., was the Court of Burgundy during the fifteenth century. It was not always held in the same place, but, as the Duc moved about from one of his principal cities to another, he was accompanied by a vast baggage-train, laden with furniture and vessels of gold and silver; for the Duc had many palaces, but none of them were kept completely furnished save when he was in residence.

The etiquette of the Court was strictly maintained. From morning until night the Sovereign of the Burgundies was surrounded by his great nobles and his guests, while all were compelled to conform to

rules laid down for their behaviour, and especially to those formulated by the Kings-of-Arms and Herald.

It is greatly from the chronicler Olivier de la Marche, who as a young man took a prominent part in the festivities of Lille, that we learn what went on at this date. From him and from a noble lady, Aliénor de Poitiers, who wrote a book called "Honneurs de la Cour," we learn how highly ceremonious were both the Duc Philippe and his son, and how strictly they caused the etiquette of their Courts to be observed.

While the expenditure of the Seigneurs upon their dress, armour, and horse furniture was enormous, the extravagance of the ladies was simply incredible, "the dress of a lady or demoiselle at the Court being the revenue of a County or a Duchy!"

The customs of the Court of Burgundy were imitated in France, and, although Charles VII. did not display the same extravagance or indulge to the same extent in banquets and tourneys, Comte Gaston IV. de Foix and other great Seigneurs were unlimited in their expenses, and are said to have turned night into day with feasting, song, and dance.

Hunting and tourneys were, generally speaking, perhaps the principal cause of the extravagance of the Princes and Seigneurs. While these were indulged in to excess at the Court of Burgundy, the expenses of kennels and horses, of jousts, tourneys, and *pas d'armes*—these latter being encounters in which several engaged upon each side—were also great in France. In earlier times these *pas d'armes* had often been regular battles fought with sharpened weapons, but in the fifteenth century this practice

had become unusual, and engagements with sharpened weapons restricted to joustings—that is to say, to contests by single combat between Knights or Squires. As a rule, the weapons employed were blunted in France, but occasionally even Charles VII. presided at contests when the contrary was the case. One such instance occurred in his presence when, in 1447, the Chevalier Louis de Bueil fought a duel on horse-back with an English Squire, John of Châlons. The courageous couple tilted at each other for six courses, and in the sixth encounter the Englishman killed the Frenchman.

After his death Charles endeavoured to put down the practice of fighting with sharp weapons, and especially did he object to its employment in the case of a *pas d'armes*, which often resembled a sham-fight, in which, while one party defended a position, another stormed it.

Burgundy, with its Order of the Golden Fleece, being at that time the fountain-head of chivalry, it was scarcely astonishing to see a famous Burgundian Knight come to Paris to endeavour to overrule the King's objections. Such an one was Jacques de Lalaing—the personification of the chivalry of the day—one who was considered as the very flower of the Knights. This young Seigneur was a kind of Don Quixote who used to roam about from country to country in search of adventure, being always ready to engage with either sharpened or blunted weapons with any one who would accept his challenges. He is stated to have travelled in search of adversaries upon whom he might prove the virtue of his steel in Italy, France, Navarre, Aragon, Castile, Portugal,



MARIE D'ANJOU, WIFE OF CHARLES VII. 1404-63

England, and Scotland. He came to Paris aspiring to give a *pas d'armes* at his own expense in the capital, when, owing to the recent death of Louis de Bueil, this knightly entertainment was forbidden by the King. In the purity of his life Jacques de Lalaing seems to have emulated the virtues of that Paladin who came after him, the celebrated Bayard, the "Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche," for when, at the age of thirty-two, he was killed by a cannon-ball at the battle of Gavre, every virtue with which Bayard was so justly accredited was attributed likewise to him. Upon his tombstone it was stated of this "humble, courteous, amiable, and charitable" Jacques de Lalaing that—

Knowing incontinence to it contradictory,
He maintained chastity to enhance his glory.

A Knight who maintained virtue and chastity in the time of Charles VII. must indeed have been *rara avis in terris*, judging from the lives of his contemporaries of either sex.

From the records of the day the conditions of the lives of the nobles must have been abominable, and, in connection with that matter, it may be mentioned that slavery still flourished in the south of France during the fifteenth century, which fact is alone sufficient to exemplify the brutality of manners and absence of feeling on the part of the Seigneurs and the ladies of the day. Not only did Spanish and Italian merchants bring negro and Egyptian slaves to France, but many white slaves, Turks, Russians, and Circassians of both sexes, were freely imported.

Of these, the beautiful Turkish and Circassian

women were not only employed for domestic purposes, but they became the instruments of their masters' pleasures. A couple of bales of moist sugar or about twenty pieces of gold would buy a young Turkish girl twenty years of age in the south of France, and the children that she might bear to her Seigneur became slaves in turn. In the neighbourhood of Rousillon there were constantly a great quantity of white slave girls, all brought from the coasts of the Black Sea. When these girls became mothers it was the custom of their unfeeling proprietors to sell them again at a profit, as wet nurses, while at Perpignan there was a public hospital, where fifty nurses were kept solely to give milk to the little children that the slave women had borne to their masters, but who had been taken from their mothers. When such of these poor little creatures as lived became big enough, they were sold to pay for the expenses of their keep.

During this period in France, before the different Provinces had become thoroughly united under one Sovereign, there were continual quarrels between the arbitrary Seigneurs and those under them whom they sought to oppress. This led to a community of interests between the lesser nobility and the bourgeoisie, or middle classes, who frequently banded themselves together against the Barons. The smaller nobility and the bourgeoisie lived, for that matter, the same kind of lives, and often sat together as consuls for the towns, while working together to protect public interests against the Seigneur who violated ancient customs or arbitrarily increased taxation. The rich bourgeois, on the other hand—the Jacques Cœur

of the period—lived in the same manner as the great noble; he had a big house, spent freely, and kept many horses and hounds. The life of but few was intellectual, while manners were coarse in all classes and the marriage tie practically a dead letter. That this was the case is amply proved, apart from other evidence, by testamentary documents, in which, among the bourgeoisie as among the nobles, the mention of legacies to bastard children of both husbands and wives is frequent. The married couples seem openly to have closed their eyes to these mutual infidelities and to have considered them perfectly normal. While in one will, one may see a husband leaving a property to the daughters whom he has had by his chambermaid, in another the wife has a codicil disposing of legacies to her illegitimate sons. All was open and above board, there was no hypocrisy about these testators—the times sanctioned their lapses, that was all.

The fact was that, in the disturbed state of society during the long period of the Hundred Years War, family ties were very loose, while crime of all sorts, including sorcery, was most frequent. The manner in which children married against the wishes of their parents cannot be better exemplified than by the case of Louis the Dauphin, while adultery and bigamy were the commonest of crimes. The Church was supposed to correct these irregularities but, as a matter of fact, the Church was so accustomed to them as to have become indifferent. Moreover, in conjugal life, the injured party seldom troubled to complain, the husband preferring to beat his wife occasionally or the wife to pay her erring spouse out in his own coin.

rather than resort to the ecclesiastics, which course might prove to be expensive.

More often, however, as above mentioned, mutual pardon and condonation was the rule of the day; when these were departed from murder sometimes ensued, but usually this only took place when husband or wife wished to marry again.

As a means of livelihood, trade had become somewhat difficult during the Hundred Years War, moreover, those who became rich were apt to excite the jealousy of their neighbours. The Church, moreover, forbade the lending by tradesmen and churchmen of money at interest, which ban rendered the accumulation of capital difficult. The Jews and Italians were, as a rule, the most successful traders and bankers, and they were very numerous in France. Still, there were some bourgeois families which managed to amass large fortunes, often as drapers, butchers, or goldsmiths, or even by foreign trade, as in the case of Jacques Cœur. In Guyenne, of course, large fortunes were often made by the wine merchants who traded with the English. Many of the bourgeois, again, made considerable incomes by buying, at a fixed sum from the Courts, the taxes and fines imposed in the course of justice, the incomes coming in to them from the fines and confiscations imposed upon the lands from time to time.

Another way in which many of the bourgeois enriched themselves was by becoming landed proprietors, purchasing estates or parts of fiefs from impoverished nobles at a cheap rate. When the English were expelled from the north and the south of France many bourgeois contrived to amass large

estates in this manner, and often built fine country houses upon them, in which they resided.

One lawyer, named Nicholas Rolin, in this way became possessed of no less than forty different country estates. This Rolin became Chancellor to Philippe le Bon and seems to have found his post a lucrative one. Some rich merchants transformed their sons into lawyers, since it was well known that the office of a "man of the robe"—that is, a magistrate belonging to one of the numerous "Parlements" which dispensed justice—was most profitable. The offices of these lawyers for generations remained hereditary, with the result that there was in time established a regular aristocracy of the robe, which occasionally contrived to ally itself with the aristocracy of the *noblesse* by marriage. Many of the men of the robe were, however, granted letters of nobility by Louis XI., while others, having bought estates which, from antiquity, belonging to nobles, carried a title with them, calmly annexed the titles attached to these fiefs. These usurpations being discovered by Louis XI., in 1470 he wisely confirmed the usurpers in their titles, while making money out of them by forcing them to pay all the dues appertaining to the issue of letters of ennoblement.

For one of a noble family to live in a style suitable to his rank had, from the crazy extravagances of the aristocracy and the custom of subdividing estates among brothers, become almost impossible before the time of Charles VII. The only resource open to the poor noble was war, with its accompaniment of pillage—in short, he had to become an *écorcheur*. When ensued a time of peace, above all, when a multitude of

the *ecorcheurs* had been put down with a strong hand, the noble found himself out of employment, and he then became a beggar from the royal bounty. While both the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy allowed pensions to many, there were other gentlemen who, receiving nothing, or being too proud to beg, set themselves and their sons to do some honest work. Some of these applied themselves to the careful tilling of the estates that remained to them, others studied for the law. The Church, of course, received a good many into her bosom, and these, if they were lucky, gained valuable preferment at an early age, being granted Archbishoprics, Bishoprics, and rich Abbeys. There were some who also went into trade, some trades soon becoming accepted as suitable for nobles. Thus the position of a master glass-maker or an iron-master was considered one which any noble might occupy without loss of dignity. Some even engaged in the trade of the sea, especially in connection with the transportation of grain, and one such was a relation of that Louis de Bueil who was killed while tilting with the English Squire. Other gentlemen of noble birth, being completely ruined and having no hopes from the King, boldly sunk their nobility, and, entering into any kind of trade, became artisans, while making apprentices of their sons. One such family, of the name of de Valavoire, entered trade as makers of boots and shoes, and this was a family whose nobility dated back for over four hundred years.

There was an important reason why all members of noble families should seek, whether rich or poor, to remain noble, and this was that the noble, like the churchman, was exempt from taxation. It will, how-

ever, be easily understood that, when so many of the impoverished nobility had fallen in the social scale, a fusion between them and those of lower degree must take place, in consequence of which some before long would lose their privileges.

Whereas formerly it had been considered almost a crime beyond pardon for one of the *noblesse* to marry a commoner, these mixed marriages now became frequent all over France. For the daughter of a noble house for whom no husband was available the Church had previously been a refuge. She was sent to a convent, but was almost always expected to take a dowry with her. Now these unmarried girls no longer went into the convents, but looked about for well-to-do young men of the merchant classes, and were glad to exchange their aristocratic name for that of an honest man who could give them a house and a home.

Their brothers did the same—thus nobles married farmers' daughters, even rich peasant girls. When children came of these mixed marriages trouble arose, it being a subject of great discussion and disagreement as to whether or no the son of a noble mother was to rank as noble, and so escape payment of the taxes, or as plebeian, and be compelled to pay them. In spite of the legal opinion rendered that "under such circumstances, any pork butcher might call himself a noble, and thus escape paying his dues to the State," in some cases the son would appear to have been admitted to his mother's noble condition.

CHAPTER X

The Crime of a Noble Lady

1449—1464

WHILE Louis the Dauphin was still living after his own devices in his distant Dauphiné, where he felt himself safe from the King, he was continuing to plot with his friends in France who were not in such a condition of security.

The chief of these was Jean, Duc d'Alençon, and, while this Prince of the Blood was going so far as to seek to recall the English to France, the Dauphin, strange as it may seem, was party to his designs. Anything, no matter what, so that it might damage his father, Charles VII., seems to have been the rule of the Dauphin's existence, and thus he even backed up d'Alençon in his treasonable relations with Richard, Duke of York.

This English Prince had, it will be remembered, been for a time Regent of France in succession to the Duke of Bedford; he therefore knew his France well, and d'Alençon sought to restore to him the northern part of the country. Had but the Duke of York been able to take advantage of the treasonable offers made to him, and to land in France, he would no longer have required to fight in the Wars of the Roses

to sustain his position as claimant to the throne occupied by Henry VI. Popular opinion in England would at once have gone so greatly in his favour that Henry VI. and Marguerite d'Anjou would have had no adherents left. York's hands were, however, unfortunately for him, tied, and he thus was unable to accept the Duc Jean's offers of Granville, on the sea-coast, Le Mans in Maine, of the city of Alençon and the town of Domfront. This fact did not prevent the Duc d'Alençon from continuing his plotting. He had a personal hatred against Charles VII., of whom he complained that he had very meanly rewarded his services in fighting against the English, and he had determined to accomplish his death. This he meant to bring about, if possible, by sorcery or the use of a subtle poison. "If," said he, "I could but obtain a powder that I know well, and put it in the steam [or the lye water; *bûée* is the word used], in which the king's sheets are placed, I would make him shrivel up." [*dormir tout sec.*] According to the depositions made against the Duc d'Alençon by his English valet, he sent to a chemist in Bruges to obtain a herb called martagon for this purpose; but he was disappointed, and could not obtain it.

His treason was discovered, and he was arrested on May 27, 1456, when the Dauphin soon began to think that it would be time for him to look out for himself, and to turn his eyes towards Burgundy as a possible place of refuge. For it came out, through the evidence of an Englishman, the Herald of the Duke of Exeter, that, while d'Alençon was making offers to York of a very large number of cannons of different descriptions, he also promised him two splen-

did coursers, which were to be sent by Monseigneur the Dauphin. Louis, however, had no intention of knuckling under at once; he accordingly ordered a conscription in Dauphiné of all men between the ages of eighteen and sixty who were capable of bearing arms. To increase his popularity, he also created a large number of nobles from the lower orders, rewarding in this manner persons who had performed for him the most ignoble offices. He is said, for instance, to have made a noble of a man who held the ladder by which he obtained access to the window of a lady named Marguerite de Sassenage, by whom he had two daughters. Whether or no this story were true, or the invention of his enemies, the "Nobility of the Dauphin Louis" was much looked down upon, and considered unworthy of joining the ranks of the old *noblesse* of France.

Nothing, however, could have been more rotten than the condition of this very *noblesse* of France at this period, a nobility of which the education of the daughters of good houses consisted in the relation to them by their parents of disgustingly obscene stories and the *fabliaux* of the period, in order, forsooth, "to teach them reserve and chastity." It is but little wonder if, but a few years earlier, that celebrated doctor of the University and preacher, Gerson, had published his Latin treatise "Against the Corruption of Youth." Everything that was possible was done to corrupt youth—the preachers used the coarsest of language, the strolling *jongleurs*, or storytellers who were admitted to the châteaux of the nobles related farcical tales of an immoral nature; even the theatrical representations of the Church, which went by the

name of "Mysteries," were full of unvarnished coarseness during this period of the Hundred Years War. When Louis XI. came to France to take possession of his throne in 1461 so little regard was there shown for the modesty of the young lady of the day that, standing in the basin of a public fountain in Paris, were to be seen displayed three beautiful young women absolutely naked, who were supposed to represent Sirens!

That the daughters of the noble, so badly trained in youth, more often than not turned out badly is but little matter for surprise. Some of these ladies, upon arriving at woman's estate, behaved indeed no better than the male *écorcheurs*. Thus a monk of Saint-Cybard relates how, in the year 1441, a Dame de Gourville assembled some men-at-arms and pillaged and burned all the houses of the people around her château. She destroyed all their crops, and likewise those belonging to the Abbey of Saint-Cybard, all of this destruction being wrought merely to satisfy her personal vengeance. To give a real idea of the shocking life led by the nobility of the time, the history of the family of de Flavy is most enlightening. It is given by Monsieur A. Ledieu, in his "Military Sketches of the Hundred Years War," published in 1887. This remarkable story has been in a large measure reproduced by Monsieur Petit-Dutaillis in a volume of the "Histoire de France" edited by Monsieur Ernest Lavisse in 1902, and it is from the pages of the learned Professor of the University of Lille that we quote its principal facts. Guillaume de Flavy was an *écorcheur* of the time of Charles VII., and the story of murder and vengeance with which his name was connected

gives a marvellous picture of the lawlessness in which the nobility were permitted to indulge with the connivance of the Crown.

A gentleman named Robert d'Aurebruche, had made one of those mixed marriages to which we referred in the last chapter. The first wife of this noble, a woman of the peasant class, having died, the relations of a noble young lady named Anne de Francières were very anxious to marry her, as she was carrying on a scandalous intrigue with a priest. Having won the consent of d'Aurebruche, when he was full of wine after supper, the relations concluded the match, when the newly married couple, who were not rich, retired to a farm near Reims, and made a modest competence by the sale of charcoal. Suddenly they became rich, the husband or wife apparently inheriting several estates and money. They had by this time a daughter, Blanche, only ten years of age, who was instantly sought in marriage by several gentlemen, to one of whom the hand of this child was given. His name was Guillaume de Flavy, and, although he is spoken of as "a notable squire," his villainous character can be judged of when we say that he it was who, by raising the drawbridge behind Joan of Arc when she had made her famous sortie from Compiègne, treacherously caused her to fall into the hands of the Burgundian troops. De Flavy, who lived by pillage, was guilty of other crimes, such as that of causing the death of the Maréchal de Rieux in prison, and the drowning and hanging of many innocent persons.

Robert d'Aurebruche and his wife were not long before they regretted having given their young

daughter into the hands of this scoundrel, for soon he terrified them into making over to him all their property, in consideration of a yearly income, which he promised but never paid. Flavy ill-treated his mother-in-law so that she died, when d'Aurebruche, finding himself starving, wrote to the King to complain of his son-in-law. This only made matters the worse for him. His son-in-law, after beating him within an inch of his life, shut Robert d'Aurebruche up in a dungeon, where he died of hunger.

To his young wife de Flavy behaved no better. Not only did he force Blanche to sell some of her estates, but he brutally and habitually introduced women of damaged reputation into his wife's bed-chamber in her presence. Not content with this conduct, this amiable Seigneur beat his wife, and locked her up for two months when she refused to give dowries to two of his natural daughters.

Under this treatment, the character of Blanche did not improve. She took to drinking more than was good for her, and repaid the blows which she received from her husband with interest upon her *demoiselles de compagnie*.

She was pretty, and still rich, and, finding herself made up to by one of Charles VII.'s favourite captains, named Pierre de Louvain, she yielded to his advances and deceived her worthless husband.

Before long Pierre de Louvain, who wished to obtain possession of Blanche's fortune, asked her to marry him, and, in order to do so, to aid him in murdering the wretch de Flavy.

Longing for revenge for her long-continued ill-treatment, Blanche agreed to this project, and engaged

two attendants—the Bastard d'Orbendas and the barber Boquillon—to commit the crime. Upon the afternoon of March 9, 1449, Blanche introduced these two men into the chamber where her husband was lying down for a nap. Seizing a pillow, she herself endeavoured to suffocate de Flavy, while the Bastard d'Orbendas sat upon him.

The old *écorcheur* struggled so violently, and cried out so loudly for his servants to come to his aid, that one of the two men hurriedly cut his throat, and then both fled.

Not so, however, the wife of de Flavy, who, fearful that her husband was not mortally wounded, and determined to finish him off, sat upon his face. And thus was she found still sitting, and smothered with blood, when the servants rushed in. The murderess was indeed unable to rise, as the dying man, in his struggles, had managed to get her dress tightly twisted round his form.

Having got rid of her tyrant, Blanche now went off with her lover, and married him.

De Flavy had, however, two brothers, who vowed vengeance; but the sum of twelve thousand crowns offered to André de Villequier, the King's favourite, gained for Blanche and de Louvain a free pardon from Charles VII.

The family of de Flavy were not going to be put off so easily, but resolved to take the law into their own hands. They engaged a couple of cut-throats to waylay and murder Pierre de Louvain in a street of Bordeaux. The new husband of Blanche proved, however, equal to his assailants, one of whom was a former priest named Fremery, the other a ruffian

called Doubte. He overcame them, gave them into custody, and they were hanged.

The brothers de Flavy were also imprisoned for a time, but upon their release they kept their eye upon de Louvain, never forgetting their vengeance.

For long they awaited their opportunity, and years rolled by. At length, fifteen years after the horrid murder of Guillaume de Flavy, his brother Raoul de Flavy waylaid Louvain in a wood and killed him. Blanche, now a widow for the second time, wrote a piteous letter a short time afterwards to Louis XI. In this she represented her desolate condition and that of her poor children, and begged to be excused for not having been to pay homage to the King. The reason for her delay was, she said, that the vengeance of de Flavy was not yet complete, but that he was vowing to murder her and her children also, and thus she went in terror of her life.

The good King Louis XI. thereupon took pity upon the disconsolate widow. Treating her as though she were a most meritorious lady, he gave her his protection, and banished Raoul de Flavy from the Kingdom.

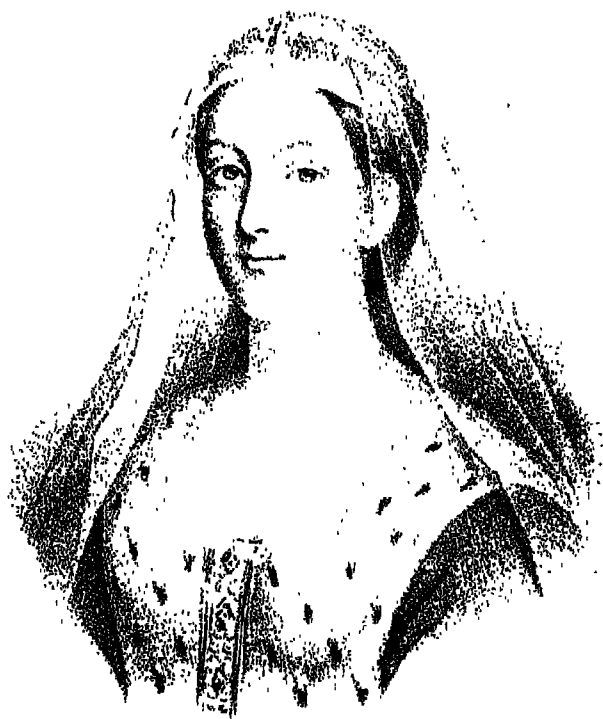
As for the excellent Blanche d'Aurebruche, we learn that she lived happily ever after under the Royal protection. Such were the benefits of belonging to the nobility, when one's purse permitted one to keep friendly with those about the King!

CHAPTER XI

Libertinage of Court and Church

FROM the foregoing history of murder and revenge among the noble classes a picture can be formed of the lamentable state of a society in which the ruling Sovereign set such a bad example to his subjects. The fact was that Charles VII., during the later years of his reign, led an existence which might well have become the Grand Turk. Even before the death of Agnès Sorel this King showed no kind of fidelity to either her or his Queen, Marie d'Anjou, while from his conduct when the days of the "Dame de Beauté" on earth were accomplished he showed himself to be a believer in free love in its widest sense. While the behaviour of his great rival, Philippe le Bon, was even more glaringly scandalous, that of the Duc d'Alençon and other great nobles was equally abominable—the valet of d'Alençon, who was the minister to his vices, for instance, even sold his own daughter to his princely master.

Part of the evil was owing to the facilities granted by the rulers for the legitimation of natural children, even those of the most scandalous unions, by letters of legitimacy, of which these rulers themselves so often took advantage; and another cause the absence of



AGNÈS SOREL

disgrace attaching to illegitimate birth. Constantly in the history of this time we read of the Bastard of Orléans, the Bastard of Bourbon, the Bastard of Vaurus, etc. These bastards were among the most notable men of their day, and everywhere admitted as the equals of their legitimate brethren. Dunois—the Bastard of Orléans—may indeed be said to have filled the proud position of head of that princely House, so near to the throne.

The real root of the evil doubtless was, however, that among those of noble blood the marriage tie was never anything but an affair of money, connection, or title. So that the girl with a good dowry could be well placed by her parents, she might well be sacrificed to a man of three times her age—the question of love never entered into the question of marriage. Love might come afterwards—then, if at home, so much the better; if outside the home, well—never mind! If, commonly, the husband deceived the wife, or if the wife sought her compensations elsewhere, who, after all, were chiefly to blame at this time in France? The answer can but be that the King and the Queen were to blame—the King for his openly immoral conduct, the Queen for the easy tolerance, the more than connivance, with which she looked on while seeing herself, as all saw her, deceived. When Agnès Sorel was her husband's *maitresse en titre*, Marie made of her her Lady of Honour and best friend. When Antoinette de Maignelais appeared to fill that post in turn, the Queen was in the habit of giving to her splendid New Years' gifts! When the Queen saw no wrong, what right had the wives of those of lower rank to set themselves up as censors of morals?

Low-minded as was Louis XI., given as he was to the perusal of such frankly indecent books as the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles," or the "Petit Saint Jehan de Saintr  et de la Dame des Belles Cousines," he yet set a better example than his father when he in turn assumed the Crown of France. Although no saint in his private life, and an unloving husband even to the "belle Charlotte de Savoie," for whose sake he had risked so much, Louis never disgraced the throne that he did so much to consolidate by constantly flaunting other women than his Queen in the public eye. Perette de Ch lons never occupied any prominent position. Whereas his father had left Louis a batch of illegitimate half-sisters, who had to be provided for and married with dowries provided from the State funds, Louis never had any natural children after he became King. His only living child, a daughter by Marguerite de Sassenage, was born while he was yet Dauphin ; she was married to Louis, the Bastard of Bourbon, who became Comte de Rousillon, and was known by the Royal title of Jeanne de France.

Thus Louis displayed few of the glaring infidelities so common to the great ones of the time after he came into public prominence. Whereas we read of the Duc de Bourgogne and his twenty-four mistresses, of the Vicomte de Thouars, father-in-law to the Duc de Bretagne, who lived with three sisters, whom he allowed grossly to ill-treat Marie de Rieux, his wife, there are no such scandals in connection with Louis XI. A bad son he may indeed have been, but then he had a bad father, whose conduct was sufficient to make any son despise him. Nor was he, although latterly neglectful, ever brutal to his mother.

And yet brutality to father or mother was of very common occurrence in that day among people of high rank. Leaving the family of Armagnac to one side, which was infamous for its treatment of parents, have we not read of the unfortunate Dame d'Estouteville, who, when she became widowed, was driven from her castle by her three sons, deprived of her all save the worn-out frock with which they turned her out to starve?

Among Louis' half-sisters, the daughters of Agnès Sorel, there was one who, in an age of horrible marital infidelity, led a life of absolute virtue. This was Marie de Valois, the second of the children whom the "Dame de Beauté" bore to Charles VII. When reading the sordid annals of the lives of the great nobles of the fifteenth century, it is with real pleasure that one dwells upon the conjugal fidelity that existed between this good Marie de Valois and her husband, Olivier de Coëtivy, who was the Sénéchal de Guyenne.

Save in her love for her husband, which was warmly reciprocated, Marie's life was not by any means a bed of roses. Her brother, Louis XI., detested her, for the mere fact that Agnès had been her mother. She lived at the Château de Taillebourg, but her life was one of trial owing to the frequent and long separations from her beloved Olivier. Yet, when they were apart, how charming were her letters! How wifely and pretty the manner in which she speaks of her young children. Again, how natural and motherly is her expression of the delight that she feels at having gone through the sufferings of childbirth, since she has brought into the world "ung beau

filz," whom all tell her to be the exact image of her absent lord, whom, by the way, she always addresses respectfully as Monseigneur.

But Marie de Valois was perhaps alone in her age—a bright star among the women of her time. The offspring of a degenerate father, the sister of a coldly calculating and cruel brother, she possessed a warm heart and admirable nature. Amid all her trials, all the persecutions that she underwent, she was moreover favoured far above other women of her day and class in possessing, throughout her chequered existence, the unvarying affection and respect of a faithful husband.

In considering the social life of the France of Charles VII. and Louis XI., it has no doubt become evident to the reader to how great an extent the disorganised state of society, from King to peasant, was a result of the topsy-turvy condition of the country during the Hundred Years War with the English.

This war may actually be said to have commenced in the year 1338, when King Edward III., going to Antwerp, openly declared himself to be King of France. At the same time he blazoned the fleurs de lys of France upon the Royal shield, where they continued to be worn until the days when George III. was reigning in England.

Owing to the perpetual state of war, which only ended in 1453, after having been intensified by the long conflict between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians, there was never any real head to France as a whole. Divided into Duchies and Counties, many of which claimed an independence which to a great extent they were able to maintain, every little ruler did

as he liked, there was no direct chain of responsibility to one King or to one Parliament. Thus society suffered—there was no cohesion. If there were, as a result, disorganisation among all other classes, it is not to be expected that the Church could escape from the general confusion. On the contrary, the body of the clergy became completely demoralised, and it was long subsequently before it recovered from the blow which it had suffered.

During the course of long years during which the authority of the State was divided, those prelates who were strongest or most favoured took the opportunity to feather their own nests. An example of this could be seen in the Cardinal d'Estouteville—a prelate who was at the same time Bishop of Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne, of Digne, and of Béziers. He was Archbishop of Rouen, Abbot of Saint-Ouen, of Jumièges, of Montebourg, and of Mont Saint-Michel. He had also several Priors: for instance, those of Saint-Martin-des-Champs in Paris, of Grandmont, and of Beaumont-en-Auge. How could one man supervise all of these important clerical posts? As a matter of fact, the Cardinal d'Estouteville never bothered his head about any one of them, but lived chiefly in Italy, where he owned various other Bishoprics.

Many other churchmen did as Estouteville, but few of the Bishops lived in their sees, while Abbots rarely troubled to visit their Abbeys. All that they required from them were their endowments. The rule of the Bishops was also, in a great measure, that of the Curés of parishes. While in some parishes there were no priests ever seen, half a dozen others might be in the hands of one cleric, who never

resided in any of them, but let them to some poor priest.

We mentioned above that the Church forbade merchants or churchmen to lend money at usury. These latter disregarded the rule, and were in many cases pitiless money-lenders, who exacted the uttermost farthing, with large interest, from their unfortunate debtors. Nor were the morals of the clergy any better than those of the laymen. Their libertinage was notorious throughout all ranks. The country Curés, in particular, debauched the wives of their parishioners and went unpunished. This was so common that none thought it at all unusual, unless it were the amiable poet Alain Chartier, so famous because Margaret of Scotland kissed him when asleep. He raised his voice in denunciation of "those who had ordained that the priests should no longer marry, and had so transformed honest and legitimate union into adulterous cohabitation."

Although the honest Chartier knew it not, the principal author of this rule of the Church was the famous Hildebrand, Pope Gregory VII. At the same time that, by force of arms, he put down the recognised custom of marriage among the clergy in Milan, Gregory was himself leading a more than questionable life with the famous Countess Mathilda of Tuscany, and also, it was said, with the Empress Agnes, mother of the unfortunate Emperor Henry IV., whom he twice excommunicated.

While many of the richer prelates were able to lead a riotous existence after their own devices, many others there were who, being without protectors, had had their parishes torn from them. These became

vagabonds, thieves, forgers, and cut-throats ; many of them joined the military bands of brigands that roamed the country. Often, again, it happened that two Bishops would go to war with one another for the possession of a particular see. That of Albi was fought over for no less than twenty-eight years in this manner, during which time the town of Albi and all the country round was frequently ravaged by Rodrigo de Villandrando, a Spanish captain employed by Bishop Robert Dauphin. Dauphin's rival, Bishop Bernard de Castillac, took the field in person, and ruined the outskirts of the town likewise. The quarrel between these two estimable members of the Church only ended with their death.

The life of the monks and nuns of this time became as much disorganised as that of the secular clergy. While many monasteries and convents lost half of their revenues, and the numbers of their inmates were greatly reduced, the greatest irregularities existed within their walls, where some of the Abbots never even put in an appearance. The former intellectual life of the monastic orders was no more to be seen in France, although in the Low Countries at this same time it may be said to have been resuscitated. One of the most famous foundations in France was that of Fontevrault, where there were both monks and nuns. It was an institution where both monks and nuns were under an Abbess, and it was customary in later years for Royal Princesses to go to Fontevrault for their education. We see this as late as in the time of Louis XV., who sent one or two of his handsome daughters to the convent.

Fontevrault offered, however, but a sorry spectacle

during the Hundred Years War, the Abbey being the home of simony and intrigue, while the monks and nuns led a life of open immorality. To make matters worse, when one churchman of note attempted reformation, he found himself openly flouted, and when two Abbesses were struggling for supremacy at the same time the nuns saucily laughed at the efforts made by one of them, Marie de Bretagne, to induce them to behave with common decency. Thus, with the constant warfare, all Church discipline had come to an end.

CHAPTER XII

Louis flies to Burgundy

1456

IN the year 1456 Charles VII., who had done nothing for Joan of Arc during her imprisonment in the hands of Burgundian or English, nothing to rescue her from her terrible fate in 1431, thought it was time that he should bestir himself on her account.

It would be, he thought, a disagreeable blow to Burgundy and England if the sentence imposed by the Church on Joan, a sentence by which she had been burned as a witch, were reversed, and he applied to the Pope therefore to annul this sentence of the Church judges. In the meantime a great number of the people in France refused to believe in her death, with the result that various false "Pucelles" had been enjoying themselves greatly by imposing on the credulous.

The first we hear of to pose as the Maid of Orléans was a handsome young woman who appeared in 1436. After contriving to impose upon a great lady, the Comtesse de Luxembourg, she managed to obtain the recognition of two of Joan's brothers at Metz. Behaving by no means with the chastity of the real Joan of Arc, this girl attached herself to a German

Count of very high degree, and followed him to Cologne. There her conduct was so immodest that the Church inquisitor was about to punish her, when her friend the Count of Wurtemberg interfered on her behalf.

This sham Pucelle then married a gentleman named des Harmoises, and subsequently had the effrontery to go to Orléans, where people thought that they recognised her, and the town bestowed valuable gifts upon this "Maid of Orléans."

A second Joan likewise went to Orléans in 1440, was recognised by the credulous, and then went to Paris, where she was firmly believed in by many, and well received. She was dressed as a man, but, being publicly conjured to tell the truth at the Palace of the Parliament, owned that she was no maid, but the mother of two children. She had, it appears, been engaged in a war as a man, and killed several men, and she departed from Paris to go into garrison in some town as a soldier. She is said to have taken service under Pope Eugenius IV.

A third Pucelle gained access to Charles VII. in 1441, and pretended to recognise him. "My darling Pucelle," said he, "I am delighted to see you back again! And now, in the name of God, pray tell me the secret known but to you and me alone." She hung her head and confessed her imposture!

What actually became of these three false Maids of Orléans history does not relate, but the King, at all events, was well enough convinced that the real one had been destroyed by fire at Rouen to be anxious for the whitewashing of her memory. Other matters apart, when even his own mother had sub-

scribed to the illegitimacy of his birth, had not the unhappy Joan declared him to be his father's son? He had therefore every reason for desiring her truthfulness to be acknowledged by the Church before all the world.

By the middle of July 1456 Charles VII. contrived to persuade the Pope to make the necessary reparation to Joan's memory, when Calixtus III. published to all Christendom her rehabilitation.

This action on the part of the King was not without its effect. The great nobles, recognising that Charles was not devoid of vigour, fell away from the Dauphin, especially as the King was soon to be seen proceeding to the south, in the direction of Lyons, with an army for the punishment of his son.

Charles had with him that old captain of the Flayers, Antoine de Chabannes, Comte de Dammartin. He sent forward this tricky person, who had, by the way, once been engaged by the Dauphin to arrest his father—a plot which had never reached a head. Chabannes seized a County belonging to Savoy, while assuring the ruler of that Duchy that he intended to hold it as a pledge, to see that he gave no aid to his son-in-law Louis.

The Dauphin was very full of fight, but, his proposed *levée en masse* of the men of Dauphiné having failed, he found that he would not have a chance of resistance. Louis soon found out that it was not so much the annexation of Dauphiné to the French Crown that was being aimed at as his own arrest. He wrote to his good friend, the Duc Philippe de Bourgogne, whom he addressed as his "Bel Oncle," informed him that his life was in danger, and asked

him to give him an asylum in his dominions. Meanwhile Chabannes laid a trap for the Dauphin by which he expected to capture him. Louis was, however, every whit as wide awake as the old *écorcheur*, whom he succeeded in making look foolish.

Giving out publicly that he was going for a hunting excursion, while Chabannes was, as expected, laying an ambush for him, Louis, with a very few attendants, galloped off in another direction (August 30, 1456). For ninety miles he fled as fast as he could go, until he landed at St. Claude in Franche-Comté, which belonged to the Duc de Bourgogne. Even here, however, he did not consider himself safe, nor until, six weeks later, he arrived, completely worn out, in Flanders.

Here he was received in the most chivalrous manner by his cousin of Burgundy. Philippe made an allowance to the now penniless Louis of thirty-six thousand livres annually, he installed him very comfortably at Genappe, in Brabant, a country abounding in game, and he wrote to the King to request him to pardon the Dauphin and his followers. Charles replied asking the Duc not to harbour his son, and saying that he would not pardon his son's followers, although, if his son chose to make submission, he would receive him and give him an appanage.

Meanwhile the King marched on with his whole army into Dauphiné, and, in spite of the prayers of the Estates of that Principality, annexed it formally to the French Crown. No longer, declared the King, should Dauphiné be considered as the domains of the Dauphin of France, and further he definitely disclaimed for the future any feudal rights or service

to the Empire. That the Dauphin had not rendered himself unpopular among the middle classes became evident by their discontent. The King, however, occupied the towns, and notably Grenobles, with strong garrisons, which act stifled rebellion, while the old nobility and the prelates openly showed their joy that the dominion of Louis had ceased. When Philippe did not send back the Dauphin to his father's loving care, this latter sneered prophetically, saying, "He has received into his house a fox who will eat his chickens." These words were to come very true in the time of Philippe's son, Charles le Téméraire, or the Bold, a violent Prince, who was at this time known as the Comte de Charolais, and in a measure even in Philippe's lifetime also.

The Duc de Bourgogne lived but little in either Burgundy or Franche-Comté, of which Provinces he merely assembled the Estates from time to time to ask for subsidies. For choice he resided in his Flemish towns, or those of Brabant, at Bruges or Brussels. He entitled himself "Duc, By the Grace of God," and the list of his other titles and possessions filled half a page. Of the Holy Roman Empire he was a Marquis, he had inherited the County of Namur and the Duchy of Luxembourg, by force and fraud he had ejected Jacqueline of Hainaut, the first wife of the Duke of Gloucester, and annexed her dominions of Hainaut, Holland, Zealand, and Friesland. He had many large ecclesiastical Principalities, such as Cambray, Utrecht, and Liége, in the hands of his illegitimate or legitimate relations, his bastard son David being the Prince-Bishop of Utrecht, his natural brother of Cambray, his nephew,

Louis de Bourbon, of Liége. In France during all the earlier years of Charles VII. he was more powerful than the King, while at Paris he still remained more popular. Thus was this ruler of so many States and Provinces, speaking different tongues, a very great Prince indeed.

In one respect this ruler was, however, behind-hand at the time that the Dauphin Louis fled to him for protection. Burgundy had as yet no regular army. Later, when Philippe's son, the fiery and cruel Charles de Charolais, obtained the power, even before his father's death, the arms of Burgundy became better organised; but at this epoch Charles VII. had better and more disciplined troops.

Like all the Princes of his House, Philippe was a man given to outbursts of the most violent temper, although he differed from his son in being also very good-natured and cheerful as a rule. He was not a worker—although fortunate enough to have good counsellors, in the family of Croy and others, who would work for him—and loved luxury, show, and women. His method of rule was through a central Council called the Grand Council at Dijon, which was superior to all the provincial Councils at Lille, Brussels, the Hague, or elsewhere. He kept up universities already established, and formed various new ones during his reign; for instance, he formed one in 1422, only four years after his accession at Dôle, and another at Louvain three years later. Constantly requiring money, Philippe was a hard taskmaster, but, while he drew the best and most reliable soldiers from his French provinces, it was from his Flemish, Belgian, and Dutch dominions that

he extracted the greater part of his immense wealth. The Order of the Golden Fleece, which exists to this day in Spain, Philippe founded in the year 1430, and while he pretended that the object of its foundation was for the preservation of the ancient customs of chivalry, the real *raison d'être* of this magnificent Order was the attachment to himself of Princes and nobles upon whose fidelity or attachment he could not otherwise depend. As already pointed out, many foreign Princes were enrolled among the lists of the Knights of the Golden Fleece, although the Prince of Orange and King of Denmark were rejected. With all his grandeur and possessions, Philippe le Bon was unable to lead an easy life, owing to the hatred which his rule incurred from many of the great free cities, whose independence he sought to crush. These cities were turbulent, greatly allied to old traditions of their freedom of government, which often extended to the country surrounding their walls. Frequently they rose in great force against the Duc, their over-lord, usually when he had himself stirred them up to revolt by imposing some obnoxious measure such as the "Gabelle"—the tax on salt—which had been the main cause of the rising of Ghent, which Philippe crushed at the bloody battle of Gavre. Knights from all parts of France had aided his own vassals in putting down "the low people" of Ghent, but the terrible example of Ghent was not sufficient to keep the other "low people" in other parts of the Duc's sphere of influence in awe. Thus he was, in spite of his pleasure-loving nature, never able to remain quiet for long, as Liège or Utrecht would be in arms if other towns were quiet. With Germany—with the Empire,

that is—Philippe had also usually some quarrel in hand, and thus his life was constantly eventful, his attention being continually called from one direction to another. To this fact it was owing that he was not to be found more often actually at war with France, he being often obliged to avoid open conflict even when the pinpricks of his neighbour, and *soi-disant* Suzerain, Charles VII., had become unbearable.

When Philippe and Charles were not, however, at open war, a constant paper war went on between them, and when, in 1456, the Dauphin came to him for a shelter, which was so generously accorded, all the old rancour broke out anew. Charles was furious at the favourable reception accorded to his rebellious son, but for the moment contented himself with his biting remark to Philippe's Ambassadors that his cousin of Burgundy was nourishing a fox to eat his chickens.

The fox, in the meantime, was lying low and playing the jolly good fellow with his cousin Charolais, while apparently thinking of nothing but leading a life of pleasure. He became the godfather of Charolais' young daughter by his second wife, Isabelle de Bourbon, who was named Marie, a godchild whom he was eventually to rob of her dominions.¹

There were many in the Court of Burgundy who did not for long view this pleasure-loving Prince with a friendly eye.

"If we have got Monseigneur the Dauphin here," these exclaimed, "what good is it to us? Never since he came has there been any peace, or has good come

¹ Charolais was also the brother-in-law of Louis, his first wife having been Catherine, daughter of Charles VII.



CHARLOTTE DE SAVOIE, SECOND WIFE OF LOUIS XI. 1445-83

our way, but always quarrels and contentions between the King and Monseigneur le Duc."

This was but too true, for war between France and Burgundy seemed continually on the point of breaking out—there were, indeed, various little acts of war constantly occurring between the two Powers.

Had it not been that Charles VII. was himself inclined to maintain peace, while Philippe le Bon feared the now excellent organisation of the Royal army, these isolated armed encounters must have led to a conflict which would have torn France and the Low Countries into shreds. It would, moreover, have been a war in which, in spite of the quarrels of York and Lancaster, England would have been bound to take a hand, with a view to the recovery of some or all of her lost Provinces on Gallic soil.

Meanwhile, the pleasure-loving fox was watching and taking note of the weak spots in the walls of the hen-roost of Burgundy.

CHAPTER XIII

How Burgundy nursed Louis the Fox

1456—1461

IN spite of the unwillingness of Burgundy to plunge into a war with France, the insults of the French Parliament of Paris almost goaded Philippe to the breaking-point in April of the year 1458, when the Dauphin had been his guest at Genappe for about a year and a half. The Duc d'Alençon was about to be tried for his latest treason, and the Duc de Bourgogne had just made a splendid state entry into the conquered city of Ghent, over which he was officially asserting his supremacy. He was holding a banquet of the Order of the Golden Fleece, all the Knights of the Chapter were present in their gold and velvet mantles and all due glory. "The Duc, who seemed," says the chronicler George Chastellain, "less Duc than Emperor," was going to seat himself at the table of velvet covered with glittering jewels and was taking the water and the napkin from one of the Princes, when a little man in black threw himself suddenly on his knee before him and presented him, the mighty Sovereign, with a writ—to be accurate, a summons or subpoena to appear in person in the Parliament of Paris, to take his seat therein merely as *a peer of*

France. In this capacity he was requested to be present at the trial of one of the King's enemies, with whom he was known to be on friendly terms, the Duc d'Alençon, a Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

The Duc maintained his dignity, and prevented the bold process-server of the French Parliament from being torn to pieces, but he expressed himself very plainly concerning the insolent tribunal that had dared to send the man to a Prince who, by the Treaty of Arras, had become independent of France.

"I pray to God that He may allow me to live long enough to take the vengeance of which I feel the appetite in my heart." The Duc did not, however, then declare war, as he said that he knew the insult to be one of the Parliament of Paris, and not of the King of France; but as he had, before three years had passed over his head, to undergo another insult of the same nature, he went on actively getting ready to engage in the conflict whenever a good opportunity should leave him with hands untied at home.

The family life of Philippe was, as he grew older, by no means one of harmony. His principal advisers were Antoine and Jean de Croy, in whose hands were several of his Provinces. Greatly opposed to these powerful and long-headed men were the Duchesse Isabelle and the Comte de Charolais, and Philippe was constantly endeavouring to patch up their quarrels with the Croys. The cunning Dauphin was meanwhile, in an underhanded manner, working in with two parties, while stirring up Charolais to behave towards the Duc in as unfilial a manner as he himself with Charles VII. The result of this treachery of Louis

to his host was that Charolais imitated the Dauphin in so far as to request Charles VII. to receive him in France, whither, however, he did not proceed.

The struggle, therefore, between France and Burgundy was continuous, nor would a change of reign from a Charles VII. to a Louis XI. make any difference. France, represented by the elder branch of the House of Valois, was anxious to become united, and continually opposed in her aims by the junior branch of Burgundy, as represented by its Ducs, at the head of various disunited and disconnected Provinces, many of which were French—some under the Empire.

While the bourgeoisie and the smaller nobility, especially the nobility of a new creation, were looking to their Monarch for protection and support, all the great nobles of France and the Low Countries, who despised these low-bred people, turned, on the other hand, to the Duc de Bourgogne as a great feudal Suzerain. Even many great lords who were not the Duc's vassals still sought to hang on to him, as representing the head of the chivalry of Europe. Thus was the rivalry bound to continue, and, although for five years Louis continued to eat the bread and salt of the generous Duc Philippe at Genappe, it was constantly in his heart. During those five years the Dauphin made himself very much at home. He sent for his books from Dauphiné and formed a library; he enjoyed the pleasures of the chase and others, more questionable, with Charolais, and, although his father attempted to starve him out by withholding all allowances, he managed to get on fairly well upon his wife's dowry from Savoy, added to the liberal income accorded him by the Duc.

The dissensions of the Court of Burgundy, so cunningly fomented by the foxy Louis, became known to his father. Charles VII., with his supporters, the Comte du Maine, Brézé, Dunois, and Chabannes, to whom was now added Jean, Duc de Bourbon, thought that in the quarrels of Charolais with the Croys lay the opportunity of France. Charolais was in treasonable communication with France, and the King's Council said accordingly that now was the time to punish by arms the various disobediences of the Duc de Bourgogne. France therefore commenced making preparations for war, and in this she was imitated by Burgundy. While making his preparations, there was one circumstance which galled Duc Philippe: this was that he was not a King, and thus the equal of Charles VII. His pride and his revenge would have been equally gratified could but he have been able to compel his cousin of France to address him as "Your Majesty."

Charles had for long past been endeavouring to extend his sphere of influence into the Imperial territories in Switzerland, working for that purpose with Sigismond, Duke of Austria, who claimed those domains. Taking advantage of the discontent thus aroused in the breast of the Emperor Frederick III., Philippe of Burgundy patched up any old subjects of disagreement and made friends with that potentate. Having obtained from him solemn investiture of the Duchies and Counties which he held of the Empire, Philippe went further, and asked the Emperor to elevate these domains into a Kingdom, one which would have rights of feudal Suzerainty over the Duchy of Clèves, the Duchy of Lorraine, and various other

Low German Seigneuries. What the Duke was really aiming at was a reconstitution in central Europe of the old Kingdom of Lotharingia, as established by the Emperor Lothaire, the grandson of Charlemagne, in the Treaty of Verdun in 843.

In the Duc's demand for this crown, his pretensions were warmly supported by the Emperor's Chancellor, Gaspard Stick by name. Frederick himself, however, was both dilatory and difficult to convince. He offered Philippe a Crown therefore, but not the one he wanted, proposing merely one to be called that of the Kingdom of Brabant. This offer Philippe did not consider good enough, and he therefore declined the Royal dignity. In so doing the Duc probably made a mistake, for once a King of Brabant, he might well have been able to extend the limits of his Royal Sovereignty over the rest of his dominions. He would seem to have regretted his refusal, as he took pains to point out later, to some French Ambassadors, that he could have become a King had he not disdained to accept a Royal throne.

Having failed to accomplish his views on Switzerland, Charles VII. now selected another means of irritating this Duc who might have been a King. The Duchy of Luxembourg had been sold to Philippe by his aunt, Elizabeth von Görlitz, the reigning Duchess, and he had occupied that small country, after some fighting with the Duke of Saxony, who greatly coveted its possession. The King, after some plotting to seize Luxembourg, with Ladislas, King of Bohemia and Hungary, to whom he offered his daughter, was disappointed, as the youthful Ladislas died. Charles then bought off the Saxon Duchess,

who claimed Luxembourg. Having given her 50,000 golden crowns, he then assumed the title of Duke of Luxembourg.

This proved to be but a barren and costly honour for the King of France, as the people of Luxembourg remained attached to Burgundy, and Charles was never able to send a man into the Duchy. Philippe held the country, and laughed in his sleeve at the expense which his rival had incurred for nothing. While he laughed, however, he struck back at a point where Charles was particularly sensitive, by making his sister's son, Louis de Bourbon, a mere boy of seventeen, Prince-Bishop of Liége.

While constantly intriguing and preparing for war, the constitution of Charles VII. had become undermined. He lived, moreover, in the most miserable condition of fear of his children, by one or other of whom he became convinced that he would be poisoned. Obsessed by this fear, and being ill, he retired to Mehun-sur-Yèvre, in the Province of Berry, and, refusing food, died miserably of starvation in July 1461.

In his last moments he insisted that he was dying owing to poison administered to him by the Dauphin's orders, and his suspicions were shared by all those who were averse to Louis.

The last actions of note of Charles VII. may be said to have been the trial of d'Alençon, who, however, escaped the scaffold, and the second occupation of Genoa by French troops in 1458—an occupation which was not, however, one of long duration, as the French were expelled. In dying, he had the satisfaction of knowing that, by his continual intrigues, he had upset

the plans of Philippe. Especially in one way had Charles accomplished his rival's discomfiture.

By the continual menace of war, he had prevented the Duc de Bourgogne from aggrandising himself in the eyes of the world by carrying out his plan of proceeding, as head of the Christian world, on a crusade to free Constantinople. When Charles died the Duc, who for the last five years had held his successor in his pocket, imagined that he was about at last to realise all of his glorious schemes. His hopes were soon to prove vain, and Philippe to learn that Louis the Fox had merely been watching the chickens.

CHAPTER XIV

Entry of the Universal Spider

July 1461

"LE Roi est mort! Vive le Roi!" Charles VII. is not yet underground, but already Louis is in the stirrups to ride over the frontier, where he has been waiting, into France. "Vive le Roi! Vive Louis Onze!" the cries reverberate to heaven from the multitudes of Courtiers, men of the Parliament, Ducs, Princes of the Blood, who post off as hard as they can to meet him whom men have since called the Universal Spider!

"A history of Louis XI.! What dry stuff!—give me a good novel!" So can we well imagine many exclaiming. Yes, perchance the novel is better; it deals with the imaginary lives of a few people—from two to nine will suffice. One can gloat over their love-scenes, pine with them in their sorrows, lament at their temporary misunderstandings, hate the villainous seducer who lurks round the corner but does not succeed in seduction, rejoice when the unexpected fortune arrives from the deceased uncle in Arkansas. Again, we can cheer loudly, in imagination, as we see the bride, in our mind's eye, and her bridal veil, con-

ducted triumphantly to the altar by the hero in his new tall hat and frock-coat.

And then what? And then nothing, save that the novel has been finished, and the little band of from two to nine persons who have so interested us have faded into thin air—they are forgotten, having disappeared into the nothingness whence they came, and left no trace. Still, it was a good book! how much more entertaining have we found it, for the moment, than the dry-as-dust records of a Louis Onze! And yet is there not a more really human interest in the doings of an Universal Spider, of one who really existed, who controlled real destinies, not of only from two to nine persons, but of millions, and who left behind him—what? Not merely the nothingness of the hero of the romance or his phantom bride—no, surely, it must have been something more than that which a Louis XI. left behind him.

What then? a new France? Yes, why not a new France? a France that, being consolidated, is a France indeed, is what we can expect to find left behind knitted in the weavings of an Universal Spider, drawn together safely in the folds of his everlasting web.

Then is not the record one as worthy of perusal as a romance? the record of one who was at once the hero and villain of the story, one whose brain was ever plotting and weaving, who knew how to bring round his enemies to his interests, how to show cold ingratitude to his friends? Above all, is not the career of one worth considering who, by no matter what evil and tortuous channels he sought his goal, yet knew by patience and perseverance how to find

it, ere he too shuffled off this mortal coil, to leave a noble inheritance to his successors?

Maybe the record, consisting as it must merely of facts, may by some be considered as only the relation of wearisome events, not worthy the trouble of writing about. Yet will we chance it—and, having so far followed the fortunes of Louis the Fox, continue to pursue his footsteps, now that he has started on his career as Louis the Universal Spider.

The Fox, still nothing but a Fox, has got his feet in the stirrups at Avesnes on the frontier, where he has been greeted by the welcome and anxiously expected tidings of his father's death. And now, although not as yet sure of his security in the saddle, he would ride to Reims—to Paris. Yet can he not go without an escort, for may there not be suspicious fox-hunters awaiting on the other side of the border? Yet, is not Bel Oncle of Burgundy ready with an escort? Ay, an escort fit for an Emperor, of an "*armée terrible et merveilleusement grande*." Rather too big that army, perhaps, as an escort for a King riding into his own country! "My dear Bel Oncle, upon whose charity I have lived for the last five years, would you kindly make your marvellously big army a little smaller? Reduce it, say, to four thousand men-at-arms? At six men to a lance, you see, that will still amount to quite a respectable quantity of soldiers, and there will not be so much expense required for their entertainment."

"Expense! Talk not to me of expense, Bel Neveu!" replies Philippe le Bon. "Have we not here full forty chariots of gold money, herds of beeves, flocks of sheep innumerable? These shall accompany us on our way—for thus it is that a Duke of Burgundy

would accompany his kinsman and protégé, to place him in triumph upon the throne of his ancestors—ay, and to keep him there ! ”

“ Protégé ! We thank you for that protection, Bel Oncle, and for the present it is most acceptable, as it has been in the past. But for the future—well, we need not talk about the future to-day, need we ? ”

So gaily they ride on ; the Fox is in the saddle now—he is safe enough with Burgundy behind him, and into France they go. The news has spread : “ The Dauphin comes, and with the glorious army of the glorious Duc, so well beloved of Paris. Let us hasten to meet him, and assure him that never, never did we aught but hate and detest Charles VII. of Valois ; never, never love any but his son, Louis, the excellent Prince, the beloved of the bourgeois of Dauphiné ; Louis, who will prove alike the poor man's and the rich man's friend—the saviour of an expectant France.”

Now who can ride the hardest ? Who can be the very first to display his loyalty to the new King ? Also who can be the first—let us say it in a whisper—to ask for something—not much, just a little post with a few thousands attached to it ?

They rode and they rode, so that the very air was full of dust on that warm July of 1461. With the Duc de Bourbon, once friend, latterly foe, in the van, they galloped on in the heat to meet the new King, so encumbering the route that his progress was blocked towards Reims, where the Crown awaited him.

On they came ! Princes, Bishops, parliamentarians, captains, once of *écorcheurs* now become respectable soldiers. Doctors of the University, and each and

every man-jack of them with something to say—something very much to the point—to this shabby Prince so bravely escorted. “Here is our uncle, the Comte du Maine! Well, let us hear him first. Oh, Fair Uncle, so you wish to be continued in the Governments of Normandy and Poitou! Well, it is not much to ask for, certainly, and I should never suspect one so loyal as yourself of seeking to reopen the ports of Normandy to the English—but for the moment we had better talk of something else. Warm weather for our accession, is it not?

“Ah! Fair cousin of Bourbon, this kind welcome is quite unexpected. We imagined that your grief at the loss of our highly respected father would have prevented your coming! What is that you say?—the sword of the Constable of France in the place of Saint-Pol, who is untrustworthy? No, really we fear it would be too heavy for you to carry in this sultry heat—and, by the way, you must find the Government of Guyenne a little wearisome, it is not so? Well, take a rest and retire to your estates for a time; you will feel the better for it, and they are large and require attention.

“What, Dunois, Dammartin, and Brézé! Have you three also ridden to meet me? Of course, I am always glad to see my old friends, and the Bastard of Orléans is ever welcome. Yet do not Chabannes and the Sénéchal of Normandy somewhat fear the headsman’s axe? But reassure yourselves for the present, Seigneurs, for we have not as yet got an executioner of our own, and the *maître des hautes œuvres* of Bel Oncle of Burgundy is too drunk to-day, celebrating our accession, to be of any use;

thus you are safe. If you will promise to behave yourselves in future, old scores may even possibly be forgotten in time; but we will see. Who comes next? Deputations from the Parliament, from the University? Oh! for Heaven's sake, cut short those Latin discourses; let us hear some honest French, or nothing at all would be better—good day, Messieurs!”

Very short and much in the above style were the greetings of the new King to the greater number of those who came to meet him, for he was safe for the moment with the might of Burgundy behind him, and soon he would gain some friends for himself among the lower orders, and then he would not require Burgundy any longer.

To begin with, it would not be a bad idea to open all the prison gates, abolish all disagreeable taxes, and inform the notables among the bourgeois of all cities that they are in future to rule themselves! No sooner thought of than done. Upon his own responsibility alone, without consulting a soul, the new King took these momentous steps—for did not the future depend upon a good beginning? Well might Rouen, that important city, cry “Vive le Roi!” Was she not henceforth to be her own mistress? Well might Reims go almost mad with joy at the entry of a King who, even before his arrival, had abolished that detestable salt-tax.

All the way along the route Louis sent off messengers in every direction. Even before Reims was reached the ruse concerning the mighty being abased and the humble exalted was being realised all over France. Sénéchals, Baillis, great officers of all

kinds were removed from their posts, were replaced ; Dammartin was condemned to banishment, but sent to the Bastille ; and Brézé, the friend of the Anjou faction and Lancastrian England, disgraced.

Thus from the first Louis showed a strong hand where the great were concerned, while patting on the back those of lesser degree. No wonder is it if Chastellain relates of these deceived commoners, who imagined the millennium had come with the new Prince, that "*Ses povres sujets cuidoient avoir trouvé Dieu par les pieds.*" They had indeed got a god by the feet, but they were to prove before long but feet of clay, liable to break beneath the touch.

Meanwhile to Bel Oncle of Burgundy, who paid all the expenses and did all the honours of France as though it were his own country in which he was receiving an honoured guest, Louis continued to observe a most humble attitude. Even in his humility, however, and while on the line of march, our Royal Spider thinks it as well to put a little spoke in Bel Oncle's wheel. Thus off rides Jean de Reilhac to forestall Bel Oncle's messenger and so arrest John, the new Duke of Somerset, who is on his way to concoct with Burgundy some plan that may possibly be prejudicial to the interests of France.

The Burgundian messenger arrives too late ; he is only allowed politely to say good-day to the Duke of Somerset, who would support Marguerite d'Anjou and her tottering husband. And yet Louis XI. has been but a few days King—he is evidently not going to allow the grass to grow under his feet !

Wonderful is his energy—wonderful also the celerity of his action—and how well he is informed from all

quarters! He knows who to fear for the moment, and thus deprives Brézé of the chance of admitting his friends the English, and thus likewise, after asking him if he wants justice, puts Dammartin in the Bastille. He also is perfectly well aware who are those whose services may be useful later. Thus may both Brézé and the old *écorcheur* look forward to a time when favour may come their way.

In England the Red Rose had but recently been trampled in the mire, the spirituelle Marguerite and Henry VI. had been defeated at Towton Field, and young Edward of York, whose father, Duke Richard, had been killed at Wakefield, had assumed the crown. What was there to prevent the new King from crossing the Channel? and, should he do so, it would surely not be from Duc Philippe that he would meet any opposition. For, as Louis realised only too clearly, Burgundy, holding all the territory of the Somme cities, the country famous to England for Crecy and Agincourt, might well open the way for England to Paris.

So long as Bel Oncle retained in his hands those northern towns on the Somme, Louis could not be sure that a France really existed. "This is a matter that must be seen to," thought Louis the Spider—and he was occupied in seeing about it for years to come.

France was not safe from without, and, notwithstanding that the Spider pardoned those disturbers of the peace, the Duc d'Alençon and the turbulent Comte Jean V. d'Armagnac, the country was not safe from within. Louis felt it in his very bones that he could trust none, that he was alone against all. The time



CHARLES VII

From the Louvre portrait

must soon come when he must ask for money, and then it would be evident enough that there were none upon his side.

Just for the moment, however, he had no need to worry himself about either friends or money, for was not Bel Oncle there by his side? The only trouble was that Philippe had, after all, brought far more men-at-arms with him than seemed requisite; concerning which Louis grumbled to Antoine de Croy: "Why has Bel Oncle brought such a heap with him? Is he afraid of anything?"

The coronation of Louis took place at Reims before his father had been dead a month, and it was a magnificent function. It was one, however, which redounded to the glory of the House of Burgundy more than that of France, being indeed the apotheosis of Philippe. Louis, who continued to do the humble before Bel Oncle, sent him into the city ahead, when the Archbishop of Reims and the city magistrates, in great state, presented the Duc with the keys. He was accompanied by a hundred and forty chariots filled with gold coins, gold and silver plates, and choice Burgundy wine, for the Prince whom he had entertained for so long at Genappe had none of these things. The Duc, who looked like an Emperor, was surrounded, as he rode in, by his pages and foot-archers, all gorgeously arrayed.

On the morrow, the day of the coronation, the young King appeared but meanly dressed compared to Bel Oncle. Philippe wore a dress which cost four hundred thousand crowns, while his Burgundian nobles and the rich Flemings in his suite were smothered in velvet, golden chains, and jewels. The horses and

pack-animals of the Duc and his suite were paraded through the streets, covered with velvet and silver bells, while gorgeous banners floated from each of the Burgundian chariots, from which the gold was thrown in handfuls to the people, who were also regaled with the Duc's rich wines.

During the ceremony Louis gave great evidences of piety, and could hardly be torn from his knees after he had prostrated himself to kiss the ampulla of sacred oil. It was necessary, however, that he should at length rise, to be stripped naked, be anointed on various parts of his body, and be presented at the altar in this condition of nature. Then, again, it was with difficulty that the Archbishop could drag the pious Spider from his knees, in order that he might be clad decently, as a King should be, before being placed on a throne twenty-seven feet high to be crowned.

Now came Bel Oncle to the fore once more, for he it was who, with great ceremony, personally placed the Crown of France upon the head of his protégé. Then, while Philippe cried "Vive le Roi! Mont joie Saint-Denis!" the onlookers, forgetting the King, shouted, "Vive le Duc de Bourgogne! Noël au bon Duc!"

Strange to relate, Louis had never yet been invested with the golden spurs of Knighthood. As he wished to create some Knights, he now had first to become one himself. Again the superiority of the Duc de Bourgogne became apparent, as it was at the feet of Bel Oncle that the newly crowned Monarch was obliged to kneel in order to be dubbed with the flat of his Ducal sword.

Philippe now thought it would be becoming in him to show a little humility in turn. Feeling that he could not possibly risk anything by so doing, he voluntarily paid the homage that he had refused to Charles VII.

However, the Duc de Bourgogne rather spoilt the effect of this action by overdoing it—for he went through the farce of promising to Louis "obedience and service" for Brabant, Luxembourg, Lauthrich, Limbourg, the County of Burgundy, Hainaut, Zealand, and Namur. None of these territories depended from the Crown of France, but all from the Empire! We can imagine Louis smiling, therefore, at the empty compliment.

At the banquet in the evening Louis plainly showed how bored he was at all this grandeur, in which nobody thought of aught but the glory of Bel Oncle. He dumped his Crown down on the table beside him, and would talk to none save a certain Philippe Pot, a wit.

From Reims the Duc conducted the new King to Paris. Here more than ever Louis realised how little the country belonged to him, for the honours were all for Bel Oncle. The people of the city, who remembered Philippe well, from the time that he had wrested the city from the Armagnacs many years earlier, welcomed him heartily, crying out that their eyes had been sore for the sight of him once more.

The justice of the city was placed in the Duc's hands, and he exercised it in right Royal fashion, giving many pardons as though it were his own capital.

He gave away, moreover, to all who asked him.

Poor nobles, distressed ladies, Abbots, Bishops, churches, convents, beggars, poor people—none were refused assistance from his unbounded liberality. He kept open house, and a table ever spread, at his palace, the Hôtel d'Artois, which was wonderfully and luxuriously furnished, and there were three Knights constantly on duty at the doors to receive all who came with becoming hospitality. Numbers of married ladies and unmarried demoiselles constantly thronged in with the rest, and greatly enjoyed the lavish entertainment so freely provided in the midst of a display of unbounded riches. No wonder was it if the Duc de Bourgogne won all hearts in Paris, and he became more than ever popular when he gave a magnificent tourney, in which all the Princes and nobles could display their grandeur.

Meanwhile, Louis shunned the public eye, made no show, and lived in very humble style in the huge Hôtel des Tournelles.

CHAPTER XV

Good-bye to Bel Oncle

1462

"BROTHER," once remarked Louis to Olivier de Coëtiivy, his brother-in-law, "I take rather after the nature of women : when I am told anything obscure I want at once to get at the bottom of it."

In this remark he gave a good insight into his nature, for he was the most inquisitive of mortals. Never had there been seen in France a Monarch like him, one who, after the fashion of his own hunting-dogs, was for ever nosing and sniffing about in all directions, constantly on the track of some one or something. From the first Louis dressed himself plainly, wearing frequently the grey cloak of a pilgrim, and always a pilgrim's hat, with a leaden image of a saint or a religious medal stuck in the hat-band.

"Is that a King of France?" exclaimed the good people of Abbeville when first they saw him with the gorgeous Duc de Bourgogne. "Why, the whole outfit, man and horse, is not worth twenty francs !"

While he dressed like a pilgrim, and frequently went on pilgrimages, his manners were by no means

those of a holy man. Although, with exception of a pair of piercing blue eyes, his own appearance was mean, he was particularly fond of the handsome of the other sex, and by no means a Saint Anthony. Never, indeed, was Louis so happy as when, in some merry society of the middle classes, which he so much affected, he found himself seated between a couple of pretty bourgeois who did not blush overmuch at the very free remarks with which he addressed them. His language before women was, indeed, of the broadest description; he never spared his wife or sisters if they happened to be present when any low remark or indelicate story came to the tip of his tongue, but rattled it off with all the freedom of an *écorcheur* from the camp of a La Hire.

While he always drank a great deal of wine, and yet kept his wits, Louis was a tremendous talker. To such an extent was this the case that Ambassadors to whom he gave audience complained that he never gave them a chance of putting in a word.

At the time that he came to the throne he was thirty-eight years old. Hating ceremony, always seeking his ease in his own fashion, he refused to live in the Louvre after his arrival in Paris, but chose the Hôtel des Tournelles. Later he was almost constantly moving about. Sometimes he would be found at Amboise, in Touraine, sometimes, and more often, at the great fortified castle which he had built, called Plessis-lès-Tours. More frequently still, after having started at daybreak with half a dozen companions, clad as pilgrims like himself, he would be found at some distant farm or inn before nightfall. The house of a bourgeois with pretty wife or daughters was peculiarly

acceptable to this nomad King. The Italian envoys, who had followed him half across France, once found him in a peasant's cottage of mean aspect.

Nothing tired or bored Louis so much as State functions of any kind, and he would do anything to avoid them, departing from a place secretly and often arriving by the back streets. When leaving a town, he would give the strictest orders that none save his archers with his baggage were to follow him, and these at a distance, while, after having mounted on his comfortable mule, he even often ordered the bridges to be broken down behind him, the better to ensure his being left undisturbed.

When in Paris, immediately after his accession, although the glorious Bel Oncle made such a magnificent display at the tournament with which he regaled the Parisians, the King did not appear upon the gay scene. He witnessed it, however, from a window of a room full of merry ladies, with whom he made free. At the same time, with his malicious nature, he had prepared a scheme for lowering the pride of the brilliant Burgundian Knights, sending among them an unknown rough fellow with vizor closed, mounted on a splendid horse, both being covered with wood and cow-skins for armour.

When this rude man-at-arms, who was a terrible champion, knocked over all the gay Knights in succession like ninepins, Louis laughed immoderately—he felt that he was having a petty vengeance.

While at Les Tournelles Louis kept up a close connection with his cousin, Charles de Charolais, of whom he could not make too much. He had a friend and companion named Bische, whom he had

frequently made use of, formerly as a spy, to note what was going on in the Court of Charles VII. Of this Bische, who had always free access to the King, Louis made his go-between with Charolais, endeavouring to work him up to persuade his father, Duc Philippe, to sell back the so greatly coveted cities of the Somme. While giving to Charolais a huge hôtel in Paris, making him an allowance of thirty-six thousand livres yearly, and sending him to make a Royal entry into Rouen, Louis was also characteristically working secretly with the Comtés hated enemy, the Seigneur Antoine de Croy.

Croy, the favourite of Duc Philippe, he sought to seduce to his interests, giving him lands and money, flattering him by the post of Grand Master of his Hôtel. Weaving thus through Charolais the son and Croy the favourite, the Universal Spider thought that he must surely gain his ends before long.

With the father he did not, however, get on so well in Paris, owing to his own distrust, his allowing it to become evident that, having used the ladder of Burgundy, he was now ready to kick it down. Moreover, Louis too plainly showed his determination to become master in his own house, now that at last he had effected an entrance.

To this effect his mind was constantly agitated; indeed, as a modern French writer observes of Louis, he might well have been addressed as "*Votre Inquiétude.*" A contemporary chronicler says that he was for ever devising a thousand subtleties, "*subtiling, day and night, new thoughts.*"

Nor were these thoughts those of the present; it was of the future Louis was always thinking, for

that future that he was continually weaving in his active brain.

While the Spider had but been Dauphin, the whole of his policy had consisted in doing his utmost to upset every plan which his father held dear. For instance, in Italy, Charles VII. had been continually against the House of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, who opposed the claims of Orléans to the Duchy. Louis had, therefore, backed Sforza. When, again, his father's troops were bundled out of Genoa, Louis rubbed his hands and laughed for joy.

When Charles VII. supported the infamous Juan II. of Aragon, Louis had maintained a constant correspondence with the King of Aragon's ill-treated son, Don Carlos of Viana. While, in England, Charles was on the side of the fair Marguerite and Henry VI., Louis pretended to be a Yorkist, and rejoiced with Burgundy when Edward, Earl of March, seized upon the Crown. In many other ways which could be mentioned had Louis while Dauphin fought against his father's interests, no matter how much they might also have been the interests of France. When he became King, however, he changed his policy altogether; his interests were now the interests of France—the real interests of France had now become his own.

Although we have not as yet mentioned him, Louis had a younger brother, Charles, Duc de Berry, who was no less than twenty-three years his junior. This young Prince, whose nature was fickle and light, had in his father's life-time been supported by many of the courtiers opposed to the heir to the Crown. When, however, these proposed to Charles VII.

to disinherit the rebellious Louis and to make of Berry his heir, that King, greatly to his credit, had refused to listen to their counsels. Louis was now soon to have trouble concerning this young brother, whose name was to be made a peg for any discontented or scheming Prince or noble to hang his hat on.

Before we come to the concerns of Berry, which became a very serious cause of disturbance for the whole Kingdom, allusion must be made to those of the House of Aragon. King René d'Anjou had a son, Jean, Duke of Calabria, who was constantly fighting to establish himself as King, or heir to a Kingdom, in some country or other.

This brother of Queen Marguerite of England was of joyous nature and a good fighter, but, like his sister, unlucky, although not to the same extent.

Louis, having become King, no longer opposed the House of Anjou, and very soon took his cousin of Calabria's part in an affair having to do with Juan of Aragon. We may as well mention, in advance, that he did so, not on account of any particular affection or the ties of blood, but hoping to gain some advantages by interfering in the quarrel.

He thought it as well, therefore, to pose as being deeply resentful at the death, presumably from poison administered by his father's instructions, of Don Carlos, Prince of Viana, the rightful heir to the Crown of Navarre. The inhabitants of Catalonia, which belonged to Aragon, rose against the evil father, and offered the Crown of Catalonia and Aragon to that romantic hero, Jean of Calabria. Not content with his shadowy claims to the succession

of Naples, Sicily, Jerusalem, and Cyprus, the son of René gladly accepted their offer. When the help of Louis was asked by the Catalans, he vowed to avenge the death of the amiable Don Carlos. Juan II. was calling upon the English for help, when Louis XI. held out his hand to his cousin of Calabria.

Behold Louis now engaged in a course which led to an army, expense, war! But how was a King who had recently declared the abolition of taxes to obtain the required funds? Two ways were open to him: the first simply to impose taxes—which he did, greatly to the astonishment of the cities—upon wine; and the other to make the Church pay up.

Louis knew his churchman, however, and was well aware that it was precious little that he would obtain by means of gratuitous gifts, and unfortunately the Church could not be taxed, any more than could the nobility.

While the people of Rouen were killing and pillaging those whom they declared to be falsely imposing the taxes which the good King had not ordered, this good King was making a beautiful arrangement with Rome.

By this he blackened his father's memory, by declaring sacrilegious and obtaining the complete reversal of the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, by which, while the rights of the Holy Chair were reduced to nothingness in France, the nomination to benefices had practically passed into the hands of the great nobles. With the ready connivance of Pope Pius II., who had succeeded Calixtus, and the aid of a Papal Legate in France, an arrangement was

come to by which the Pope and the King were in future to arrange the nominations between themselves.

Having thus got his hand upon the Church, in a manner to be able to dispose of the benefices in a way to make money out of them, beautiful to behold was the filial piety of Louis!

With tears in his eyes, he kissed the Papal Bull, which he solemnly placed in a golden box, and at the same time, bitterly weeping, he celebrated an expiatory service over his father's body at Saint-Denis. At this the Pontifical absolution of Charles VII. for his impiety in having imposed the Pragmatic was solemnly read. Thus was the unfortunate dead King publicly branded by his son as having been guilty of sacrilege.

Those who had profited by the Pragmatic, directly or indirectly, during the reign of Charles VII. now all found themselves blackened with the same tar brush as their late monarch. For if he had been sacrilegious, so had they ; moreover, they had received no absolution ! A howl went up throughout the Kingdom ; there was general agitation, while Paris and its Parliament remonstrated loudly. Louis, however, had accomplished his first big stroke, and let the people, big and little, howl. At the same time he caused the ears to be chopped off of some of those who had caused the disturbances about the wine-tax at Rouen, while to others he sold pardons, making a good sum by the bargain.

While these events were taking place, Louis contrived to disgust Bel Oncle, who was still in Paris, in a matter concerning the great fortified city of Liège. This city, with the district around it con-

taining one or two other fortified towns, formed the district of Liégeois, and, although situated in the middle of the dominions of the Duc de Bourgogne, was ruled over by a Prince-Bishop. By ancient rights this ruling Prelate had been appointed by the Canons of the Chapter of the Cathedral of Saint-Lambert, in Liège, but Philippe had terrified Heinsberg, the ruling Bishop, and constrained him to resign in favour of his young nephew, Louis de Bourbon. This event had taken place while Louis the Dauphin had been enjoying Bel Oncle's hospitality at Genappe, during which period the people of Liège, an unmannerly lot of coal-mine owners and iron-workers, who had reduced their nobility to impotence, had rudely flouted the heir to the throne of France. Upon his accession he threatened Liège with troops, whereupon the people, becoming impressed with his importance, saw in him a support against the ambition of Burgundy. They sent him an embassy to Paris, which embassy, greatly to the annoyance of Philippe le Bon, was received with high honours by Louis.

Directly after this event the Duc de Bourgogne took his departure in a discontented mood, for he had recognised the ingratitude of the King, whom he had escorted with such prodigious honour to his throne, since he had found himself opposed in a matter of the removal of duties upon Burgundian products coming into France. Further, although Louis had pardoned Bel Oncle's friend, Jean, Duc d'Alençon, he yet retained his places and his children in his hands. The people of Paris saw with grief the departure of the popular and generous Prince. They

were beginning by this time to get more than an inkling of the character of the one whom he was leaving behind him as their ruler, and rightly feared that, with the departure of Burgundy, the merry days of joyous entertainment and open-handed generosity were for ever past and done with.

The King celebrated the departure of the Duc by the perpetration of an insult under guise of a compliment. When Philippe, with his followers, were all without the walls, Bel Oncle beheld a deputation riding to overtake him. It was headed by the officer in command of the great fortress of the Bastille, who humbly offered the Duc the keys of that castle, which had been sent by the King. History has not recorded what Philippe did with those keys, nor exactly what were the words of thanks that he sent back for this tardy honour from him whom for so long he had fed and clothed.

Bel Oncle has gone! Louis is free! Were he ever guilty of an act so undignified, we can imagine his dancing a jig for joy with some of those laughing dames of the bourgeoisie whom he loved so well. And why not? Did not even the great Richelieu dance all about his apartments when he obtained his Cardinal's hat!

CHAPTER XVI

Louis and his Tricky Ways

1462—1463

LOUIS XI. was a really clever man, and his intrigues were practical. He loved nothing so much as to put his adversaries at cross-purposes with one another, and to profit by their dissensions. After stirring up obstacles in their path, he knew how, when the right moment had come, to smooth the track out before them. Thus they became grateful, and Louis the gainer. By his agreeable and amiable manner of talking, by his friendly, plebeian ways, he charmed people, put their fears to sleep, even at times won their hearts. Knowing his power, he preferred to negotiate for himself, and oftentimes won the odd trick by so doing. Never lived there a Prince who was so subtle in the art of gaining over an adversary to make of him a friend. A Milanese Ambassador of Francesco Sforza once said that Louis XI. would appear to have been brought up in Italy, so proficient was he in Italian methods of seduction, so cunning his artifices that they were not apparent. Moreover, his persistency was great ; when once or twice rebuffed the Universal Spider never despaired, and in the end, by money, flattery, or promises, he gained his object.

Diplomacy was his favourite weapon, far preferable to him than armed force. Although by no means chicken-hearted, he never, when he could avoid it, resorted to the arbitration of war—not from the dislike of bloodshed, but because in an unsuccessful battle he stood to lose the result of deep-laid schemes, plots that had taken long to mature.

When Louis did go to war, knowing his history, and how often his ancestor, Charles V., had scored by avoiding pitched battles, he imitated his tactics. His strategy consisted largely in retiring opportunely, in holding fortified places near a frontier, in commanding a river, in destroying all the provisions in a country, so that an enemy must be starved into retreat. Not for him the methods of a Grand Condé, who put his head down and, regardless of obstacles, charged blindly, like a bull. Louis kept his eyes open, while turning them, like a crab, sideways. If to slip off to a flank or to the rear seemed convenient, he slipped; but an enemy wishing to follow found nothing to eat, and was stayed by the simple rule of the stomach. In short, the methods of fool-hardy chivalry said nothing to Louis XI., who usually knew other ways of reaching his goal.

After having allowed the Duke of Burgundy to leave Paris, well knowing that he must have offended his former protector, Louis foresaw that the consequences must be a *rapprochement* between Philippe and, another great potentate, the Duke of Brittany. As he wished to take a long tour all round the south of the Kingdom, this would not do at all; it must be prevented at any cost.

This was simple enough to one who knew how

to arrange matters. He had already flattered Charolais by putting him nominally in charge of Normandy, after sending him with Royal honours to Rouen. He now would flatter François II., Duc de Bretagne, who had succeeded Arthur III., the once redoubtable Comte de Richemont, on the Ducal throne. Louis asked François to be kind enough to act as his lieutenant or viceroy in the north-western part of France during his absence, to hold for him all between the Seine and the Loire, to keep a grip, in fact, on Normandy, which was supposed to be governed by Charolais. The request, being no doubt accompanied by a proper honorarium, worked like a charm.

Bourbon and Anjou were, however, too friendly, so something must be done there. The Duc de Bourbon owned or controlled practically the whole of the centre of France—a huge country; he was also Governor of Guyenne. To set Bourbon against Anjou, the King therefore gave Guyenne to Charles, Comte du Maine, the brother of René of Anjou. He had no fear of the Comte du Maine, so he also gave him the Government of Languedoc. While giving the Government of these Provinces to Anjou, Louis was, however, careful to keep them garrisoned with his own troops, under his useful tool the Bastard of Armagnac, who had been with him in exile in Burgundy. Having set his house in order, and made offerings to numerous shrines of saints in Rome and various French towns, Louis started on his journey by making pilgrimages to places on the Breton border, and even to the town of Nantes.

Seeing the King thus poking his nose into his territories, Duke François became much alarmed,

especially fearing that Louis intended forcibly to carry off the Dowager-Duchess, in order to cause her to make a political marriage with one of his friends, a Prince of the House of Savoy.

Proceeding southwards by the west of France, Louis examined all the towns, paying particular attention to the seaport of La Rochelle and the city of Bordeaux. He was, while travelling in pilgrim's garb with five others dressed like him, yet followed by a numerous artillery. Thus, after treating Bordeaux with great benevolence, and thus winning the hearts of the bourgeoisie of that important place, he felt himself strong when Juan II. came to meet him. The King of Aragon had been getting the worst of it in his war with the Catalans, from whom he had escaped with difficulty when he came abjectly to beg Louis to assist him.

Louis made Juan II. promise to deliver over into his hands the two towns of Rousillon and Perpignan, and gave orders to have them seized unless they were promptly handed over, for he did not trust Juan II., the murderer of his son, Carlos of Viana.

This despicable Prince was guilty of another crime in his family at this time. After the death of his son, Carlos, his elder daughter Blanche was the heiress to the Crown of Navarre. Having called this daughter to him, on the pretence of giving her in marriage to the King's brother, the Duc de Berry, Juan II. gave her over into the hands of her sister, Éléonore, the wife of Comte Gaston IV. de Foix. By the Comtesse de Foix her sister was imprisoned in a dungeon at the Castle of Orthez. She is said to have died of poison, after marrying Henry IV. of Castile.

By this suppression of both Carlos and Blanche, Éléonore became the unquestioned Queen of Navarre. She had a son named Gaston, to whom Louis XI. gave his sister Madeleine in marriage, and they were the direct ancestors of the famous Henri de Navarre, who figured as Henri IV. of France.

While he was in the south and arranging matters there to his own satisfaction, Louis was not unaware of the fact that a large English fleet was ready and under command of the famous Earl of Warwick, the "King-maker," about to make an attempt on the northern coasts. Those about him had wondered greatly at the King leaving for the south at such a time; but Louis had smilingly replied to one of them that he was perfectly safe in leaving, as the Earl of Warwick would not sail from England before a certain date, which he mentioned.

The fact was that the tricky King-maker was deceiving the youthful Edward IV., who had seized the throne of England from Henry VI. after Towton, and was secretly informing Louis XI. of all that was going on.

When at length Louis returned to the north the English fleet set sail, but as all the northern fortresses could be seen to be well garrisoned and the King's army also present in Normandy, the English under Warwick made no attempt to disembark upon land in the occupation of the King of France.

Warwick had, however, to do something to justify his cruise, and so he made a landing in the dominions of the Duc de Bretagne, near Brest, and pillaged the country.

In no way could Warwick have served Louis a

better turn. The Bretons were now all furious against the English, with whom they had been previously quite ready to combine against France.

Louis XI. was in a particularly good humour at this period, when he received the news that the fugitive Queen of England had landed in France. This unfortunate cousin of Louis was now following him about from place to place, hoping to gain his aid to recover her Kingdom. Neither her father René nor her brother of Calabria could do anything to help her, and Louis allowed Marguerite to remain in doubt for a time. At last he made a bargain with his cousin, promising to help her with money upon an undertaking from her that, should she retake Calais from the Yorkists, she would contrive to let that city fall into his hands. The way in which this was to be managed was by giving the command of the place into the hands of Jean de Foix, Comte de Candale. This man had been entirely devoted to the English interests in Guyenne and banished in consequence by Charles VII. Louis, however, had recalled Candale from banishment and bought him over to his interests. This was one of those tricky bits of policy in which the heart of Louis delighted. He felt that he was playing for the future. He contrived, moreover, to induce the Duc de Bretagne to help Marguerite with a far larger sum than he advanced himself merely as a loan upon the security of Calais. He would not give her a man, but allowed her to make use of the services of Pierre de Brézé to raise and conduct into Scotland a force of nobles and men from Normandy. With Brézé and the Scotch Marguerite was soon in arms.

While Edward IV. was occupied in the north with

this force, Louis made an attempt to bounce the garrison of Calais into surrendering that place into the hands of the Comte de Candale, nominally for Marguerite d'Anjou. He might well have succeeded in his design had he been on better terms with Philippe de Bourgogne. When, however, Louis asked for the loan of a few Dutch war-ships to aid him in his little plan, by threatening Calais from the sea, Bel Oncle flatly refused them. He was on very good terms with the House of York, and was not going to allow his friendly relations to be disturbed.

While Brézé and Marguerite were meeting with no good luck in Scotland, and Louis was meeting with his own rebuff at Calais, the estimable King of Aragon, thinking it safe to flout the King of France, retook Rousillon and Perpignan. Back flew Louis to the south, where he soon recovered these places, while checkmating Juan II. by making an alliance with his rival, Henry IV. King of Castile.

This King came across the Bidassoa in great state to see Louis in France. He was surrounded by a splendid and picturesque bodyguard of Moors, and himself gorgeously arrayed.

Louis, on the other hand, was clad in his grey pilgrim's cloak, while he signed a treaty with the King of Castile, by which, at the expense of Juan II. and of the Comte Gaston IV. de Foix, Henry was rewarded with part of the territory of Navarre.

Gaston IV., who had worked well for Louis in the matter of the seizure of Rousillon, cried out loudly. Thereupon Louis blandly promised that he would some day give him Rousillon, but in the meantime, just to keep this useful Prince quiet, he gave him the

County of Carcassonne in Languedoc. The counsellors of Louis were astonished at his manœuvres, manœuvres by which he seemed to close Spain to France. They were still more surprised when, in this fit of generosity, the King entered into relations with Sforza, who held the possessions of the House of Orléans, and ceded to him his rights in Genoa and Savona, and also the County of Asti, but this latter only on payment to Charles d'Orléans (May 1463).

Thus the doors of Italy seemed likewise closed to France; but, while Louis deigned no explanation of his actions, he had his reasons, and they were good ones. He foresaw signs of an alliance between England, Burgundy, and Brittany in the north, and he wanted the south free. Especially did he wish Francesco Sforza not to become on friendly terms with Savoy, which Louis hoped himself to be able to annex before long.

While all the Princes and nobles cried out against these actions on the part of the King, the wisdom of his policy became apparent when Francesco Sforza sent him a magnificent body of men-at-arms from Lombardy.

It was worth while to make a vassal of Sforza while he also made of him such a useful friend! Louis now found his hands greatly strengthened; he cared not one snap of the fingers what anybody said. He had ensured quiet on both the southern frontiers, he had obtained a fine force of Italian cavaliers, and soon now he hoped to succeed in buying back from Burgundy the cities of the Somme.

He had never ceased to worry the old Duc Philippe about this matter, never ceased to cosset and caress the old Duc's favourites, the Croys.

There were four of these of importance : Antoine de Croy, his brother Jean, and, their nephews, the Sieurs de Quiévrain and de Lannoy. Through Philippe's blind affection for them, these had contrived to get into their hands the Duchy of Luxembourg, the Counties of Boulogne and Namur, and all the strong places in Flanders and Hainaut. Being at enmity with Charolais, the heir, these Croys looked forward to being able to establish their independence at the death of Philippe le Bon, who was in bad health. All were well paid by the King. The time to obtain the Somme cities was evidently before the young and violent Charles de Charolais should succeed his father. Unfortunately for Louis, Charolais came to his sick father, commenced to dominate him, and talked about bundling out the Croys neck and crop. The Duc's wife, the Duchesse Isabelle, also came from a religious house to which she had retreated. She nursed Philippe so well that her husband, who had seemed on the point of death, recovered and commenced to reassert himself. One of the Croys now came to Louis, and told him very plainly that he had better stop his vexatious proceedings about frontier duties, by which he expected to worry Bel Oncle into yielding. Should he not do so, Croy told the King, he would spoil all his chances.

As Louis had shown in the past, he knew the appropriate time in which to show humility. He accordingly solemnly renounced all his claims to the Duchy of Luxembourg, a step which had a good influence ; but still Charolais and his mother held Philippe back.

That the power of the son was still considerable

was proved when he persuaded his father to execute his favourite valet de chambre. Charolais swore, no doubt falsely, that this valet was trying to poison him. Chastellain relates that, when at last the Duc Philippe consented to the death of his favourite, he took a strange revenge, by causing the death at the same time of the person who had denounced his valet to his son.

The Croys, who were alarmed for themselves, contrived a counter-stroke, by arresting an emissary whom Charolais had sent to stir up the Dutch Provinces to acknowledge him during his father's life-time. The Dutch towns had, however, refused to rise; on the other hand, so greatly did they dread the son that they held services in the churches for the father's recovery. When they heard that he was better there was general rejoicing, for all dreaded his death. A very strange evidence of the popularity of the old Duc among those who feared the advent of his successor was to be seen when all his hair fell out. Then, to pay court to him, and, as a mark of respect, to make themselves appear as old as Philippe le Bon, numbers of the people shaved their heads. Thus when he was taken for his airings, Bel Oncle found himself apparently in a city full of old bald-headed men.

Meanwhile the Croys were certainly aiming at the establishment of a Duchy or two of their own in the Walloon country, which was opposed to Holland and all Dutch influences. To gain this result it was necessary to keep in with the King, who might aid them later to maintain themselves. To gain that protection a bargain was required. Louis stated his terms plainly enough: "The Somme, or expect nothing from me!"

Not getting his own way, he let loose their mortal enemy, the Comte de Saint-Pol, upon the Croys, to frighten them by saying that the King was going to accept the position of arbitrator between the Duc and the rebellious people of Ghent and those of Artois, who were discontented about the taxes. With this arbitration ruin would probably come to the Croys! Between the King and Charolais, who thirsted for their blood, they were between the devil and the deep sea. They worried the Duc at last, therefore, into signing a treaty abandoning the cities of the Somme for the sum of 400,000 golden crowns. By his signature to his final receipt, given upon October 8, 1463, Philippe le Bon gave away to France a most important strategic line of defence.

Louis meanwhile had to find the money to pay withal! He had won his heart's desire, after all his scheming, and was not going to lose it for want of the necessary cash; it must be obtained no matter how, and at once.

For the first time, now, Louis really put the screw upon his Kingdom in a thoroughly impartial manner. The towns, the abbeyes, the rich, had to make forced loans; new taxes were invented to be paid instantly; even money lodged by persons pleading before the Courts of the Parliament and the Châtelet was ruthlessly seized by the King. He handed over the whole of the immense sum in two payments, the first upon September 12 the second upon October 8. But it was, however, sadly that Philippe received the money, for he felt that he had made a great mistake thus to abandon these northern French towns. He gently reproached the Croys, but it was too late to withdraw.

So Bel Oncle pocketed the cash and lost the Somme, if but for a time.

Almost at the same date the Croys proved their utility to Louis by arranging a truce between him and the young Edward IV., with whom a state of war still existed, although, since the expedition of Warwick with his fleet, there had been no further attempt at an invasion of France. This matter being successfully accomplished in October 1463, Louis now commenced to worry the Duc de Bretagne, by claiming Suzerain rights over not him alone but the Bishops of Brittany, from whom he demanded homage.

The Duc de Bretagne resisted, as he considered his position to be the same as that of an independent King. He ruled "By the Grace of God," and in all his deeds talked of "our Royal and Ducal powers." The cause of the claim made by Louis was to extract money. This he demanded from the Duc, as succession dues, according to old feudal custom being due to him as Suzerain, owing, he said, to François II. not having been the son but the collateral of the last Duc de Bretagne. The question about the Bishops of Brittany was that Louis claimed that, as King of France, he was their sole Suzerain. He arrogantly maintained that they were his vassals, and not those of the Duc.

Needless to say, there was a scheme to obtain the Church funds of Brittany underlying this unjust claim. The Duc, ignoring the King, applied direct to Rome, when Pius II. snapped his fingers at Louis in the matter of the Breton Bishops.

Foiled in Brittany, Louis turned upon the churchmen in his own dominions, demanding from them a list of all their possessions, and payment by them of

seigneurial rights. He attacked the nobility in the same way, and not only forced those false nobles to whom reference has been already made to pay the dues of nobility, but insisted upon payments from the real nobles upon all sorts of ancient feudal excuses for extracting money.

The greatest consternation was to be seen in all directions at the King's searching inquisition, but the nobles had no redress, but were compelled to pay through the nose, while, once having got his hand upon the Church, Louis went ahead. He sent the Pope's collectors out of France, and commenced to seize the temporal possessions of Cardinals and Bishops galore. The appetite coming from eating, he all but seized the Pope's own city of Avignon, in the south of France, a step which was recommended to the King by the nephew of Pius II., Jean de Foix, Comte de Candale.

In his constant quarrels with the nobles, Louis, about this period of his reign, commenced to seize and retain in his own hands the strong places of such to whom he accorded pardon, and to occupy them with his own garrisons. Another trick of the King was to seize and hold their children. We have already mentioned how he retained those of the Duc d'Alençon, but there were many others. Indeed, never were there seen so many children about a Court as at that of Louis XI. The children of the great, while retained as a sort of a caution to keep their parents in order, not only were well brought up, but often made much of. As they grew up, or even in youth, Louis occasionally allied these children to his own Royal House. An example was to be seen in

the case of Gaston, the young Comte de Foix, to whom he gave his sister Madeleine; another in that of Louis, the son of the Duc d'Orléans, whom he married to his younger daughter, Jeanne. This boy later was, by the bye, to become Louis XII. of France.

While holding this child, Louis was irritating the father in the matter of the Italian claims of Orléans. He thought it just as well to keep the son in his clutches while driving the father to the verge of desperation.

Meanwhile, Louis was not forgetting to keep his eye on the Duchy of Savoy, from which he had taken his own wife. He kept a very strong hand upon his father-in-law, Duc Louis, and contrived to draw into his clutches by a trick a violent young Prince of Savoy, his brother-in-law Philippe de Bresse, whom he promptly clapped into the dungeons of the Château de Loches. The better to keep Savoy in constant remembrance, he married his sister Yolande to Amadeus, his eldest brother-in-law, a Prince of whom he hoped to be able to make an easy tool. Louis thought even to capture Edward IV. of England, through the good looks of one of his sisters-in-law of Savoy. Edward was supposed to be unmarried, and Louis accordingly proposed him a wife whom he thought would be entirely under the thumb of France.

Unfortunately for the designs of the King of France, Edward had already provided himself with a spouse in secret, one through whom he was more likely to be attached to Burgundy than to France. This was Elizabeth Rivers, or Woodville, who was the

daughter of Jacquetta of Luxembourg, formerly Duchess of Bedford, by Lord Rivers. Jacquetta was sister of the Comte de Saint-Pol, of whom we have so often made mention, and with whom Burgundy was in constant alliance. The fair Elizabeth Rivers was the young widow of Sir John Grey, a strong partisan of the House of Lancaster, who had just lost his life in fighting against Edward IV. when the King first met and loved her. He married her in secret, but declared his marriage to this member of the House of Lancaster when Louis proposed to him his young lady of Savoy.

Louis was greatly annoyed to find that what he had plotted to win had thus been won by Burgundy, but he was accustomed to constant rebuffs of this sort, and said little. He thought, however, that his cousin, the Comte de Charolais, had got ahead of him by proposing the match, and probably he was right!

CHAPTER XVII

Louis a Revolution in Himself

1462—1463

THE Comte de Saint-Pol was, as stated, the brother of Jacquetta, formerly Duchess of Bedford, and mother of the newly made Queen of England, and thus Saint-Pol, the close ally of Charolais, was her uncle. When Louis XI. learned that Saint-Pol had sent his brother, Jacques de Luxembourg, with a splendid troop of a hundred Knights, to the wedding he was all the more annoyed.

As a sister of these Luxembourgs had married one of the recent Ducs de Bretagne, the King more than ever feared a combination against him of Charolais, England, and Brittany. It seemed to him that his cousin, the heir of Burgundy, was indeed against him at every turn, that his own secret alliance with the Croys, and their influence over the old Duc Philippe, would prove of but little use to him against such a persistent, if not open, enemy as the future Charles the Bold.

Nevertheless, Louis determined to make a strenuous effort to win over the father against the son, and therefore, proceeding to Tournai, in the north, paid a surprise visit to Philippe le Bon in his County of Artois. He took with him his Queen, some Princesses

and ladies, by whose smiles and blandishments he sought to win the good graces of the old Duc, who had ever been a devoted admirer of the fair sex.

This move proved entirely successful ; the Duc was so enlivened at the unexpected arrival of the bevy of fair ladies that he felt himself young once more. He would not allow them to leave his Court, but for several days played the gallant at their feet, while entertaining them with various fêtes and diversions on a gorgeous scale.

Proceeding to Hesdin, Louis now exerted all his diplomacy to charm the Duc, flattering Bel Oncle to the top of his bent. Finding the old ruler of Burgundy in such a good humour, the King began asking him for various favours—first the cession of the County of Boulogne, then proffering a request for the town of Lille. As Philippe did not appear to show any alarm at these modest demands, Louis thought that he would venture a further step. One day, when they were out together on a hunting-party, the King suddenly remarked, in a cajoling manner, “Bel Oncle, will you not allow me to bring to his bearings your disobedient son, my fair brother Charolais? Let him be either in Friesland or Holland, but only give me your permission, and I promise you I will soon fetch him and bring him to reason at your feet.”

Philippe had certainly constantly had cause to complain of his son's unfilial behaviour, for much of which he knew Louis to be responsible, but when it came to the question of having that son arrested by the King of France his fatherly instincts became aroused, and he felt horrified.

Having answered the King in a temporising manner, he assembled all his people around him and, without apprising Louis of his intention, rode out of the forest by a different route to that of the King.

He now became alarmed for his own person, especially as he was receiving secret advices from the wide-awake Charolais to the effect that Louis was only remaining in his neighbourhood with an idea of seizing his person, and possibly of putting him to death.

Although Louis had no intention of the kind, since it suited him far better to have Philippe, governed as he was by the Croys, on the Ducal throne of Burgundy than his son Charolais, the old Duc determined to remove himself without delay to a safer distance. He felt that he had all the more reason for taking himself off on account of the recent action of Louis in making Governor of the country between the Seine and the Somme Jean de Nevers, now known as the Comte d'Étampes. This Jean de Nevers was a cousin of Philippe de Bourgogne. His father, who had been Philippe, Comte de Nevers, was killed at Agincourt in 1415, as was also his uncle Antoine, Duc de Brabant and Comte de Rethel, while he himself was born on the day of that battle. Upon Jean's father's death Philippe, who had not yet become Duc, married his mother, and pretended to take care of him as well as his cousin, Charles de Nevers, the son of the Duc de Brabant. The way he took care of these young cousins was to swindle them out of their inheritance of Brabant, Étampes, Auxerre, Péronne, and Rethel.

Thus Jean de Nevers became the enemy of both

Philippe le Bon and the Comte de Charolais. This latter accused him of seeking to take his life by sorcery, and sought to kill Jean, who had accordingly taken refuge with Louis XI. The King thereupon placed this much-despoiled Prince upon his frontiers of Picardy on the Somme, well knowing that Burgundy could have no more deadly enemy than the man whose cousins sought, after robbing him, to burn as a wizard.

Louis had himself much to fear at this period from the united malevolence of Charolais and Duc François II. de Bretagne. A few lies more or less made but little difference to François, but their audacity was at times almost comical. At this very time he was demanding, on the sly, six thousand English archers from Edward IV., and yet, in order to damage him with his subjects, he had the effrontery to spread the report that Louis XI. was summoning the English back to French shores.

We have mentioned how, not long since, the King had contrived to lure to France Philippe de Bresse, one of his brothers-in-law, son of Duc Louis of Savoy, and, having done so, had clapped him into the dreaded dungeons of Loches. This arrest had been made at the request of the young man's own father, and the King had been innocent enough to hope that Bel Oncle would give him a similar authority to arrest his son Charolais.

Finding himself mistaken, there can be but little doubt that Louis endeavoured to secure the person of his Burgundian cousin without the father's permission, although, as might have been expected, he vigorously denied having any knowledge of or connec-

tion with an attempt which was made upon Charolais, but failed.

The circumstances were as follows. One of the followers of Jean de Nevers in Picardy was a free-lance known as the Bastard of Rubempré, who was the cousin of the Croys. This daring young spark lived as much by piracy on the sea as brigandage on the land. With a whaling-ship which he had captured the Bastard of Rubempré, in time of peace with Brittany, almost succeeded in capturing in the Channel a messenger of the Duc François II., who was carrying a secret treaty to Edward IV. Having narrowly failed in this attempt, the Bastard boldly sailed off to a Dutch town where Charolais was at the time. Leaving his small force of forty men on board his whaler, the Bastard, after going alone the rounds of the taverns of the place and making inquiries as to the Comte de Charolais's movements, boldly climbed the walls and reconnoitred the approaches of the castle wherein the heir of Burgundy was dwelling. Just as he was retiring, having resolved to attempt a *coup de main* with his forty pirates, the bold Bastard of Rubempré was unfortunately perceived. He made good his retreat to a church, where he was, however, discovered. Although he told a tissue of lies to the effect that he had just come from Scotland to pay a visit to one of his cousins, a lady of the House of Croy, the real object of his visit was discovered, and he was incarcerated.

Convinced that Louis XI. was at the bottom of this attempt upon his liberty, the Comte, who was delighted at his good fortune in having such a story

to tell, sent off at once his good servitor and subsequent chronicler, Olivier de la Marche, to warn his father at Hesdin to look out for himself. At the same time the Comte sent off a begging friar with instructions to preach high and low from various pulpits in the Low Countries the story of the King's infamy—how he had sought to seize and carry off the Comte de Charolais.

Louis XI. quickly winced under the blow, and sent off to the father, who had quickly placed himself beyond the King's reach, a regular embassy to complain that Charolais was basely attacking his honour.

This embassy was headed by Morvilliers, a fraudulent Magistrate of whom Louis had made his Chancellor and tool, while Charolais also appeared to plead before his father and defend himself. When the two parties met before Philippe le Bon, Morvilliers, carried away by his own eloquence, went far, even venturing to accuse Charolais of the crime of *lèse-majesté* in his relations with Brittany and England. When the French Ambassadors at length retired, they took with them a threat to Louis from Charolais. As they were leaving he said, "Make my humble service to the King, and tell him that he has caused the Chancellor to administer to me a good dressing down, but that he will be sorry for it before a year has passed over his head."

This was a threat which he found himself able to justify, for already there was dissatisfaction against Louis in all directions, which he well knew how to turn to the discomfiture of the King.

As for the Duc de Bourgogne, he merely sent a

good-natured reply, while making light of the whole affair. Among other things, he excused himself for his sudden departure from the neighbourhood of the King as follows: "I left Hesdin on a fine sunshiny day, and for my first day's journey only went as far as Saint-Pol. Surely no one could call that a sign of undue haste! The King, I know well enough, is my Sovereign Lord, but I have not been wanting towards him in politeness, or indeed to any one, unless it were perchance sometimes to the dear ladies. If my son shows himself suspicious he does not get it from me. Rather does he inherit those traits from his mother (Isabella of Portugal), who is the most suspicious woman living."

Very shortly after this message was received by the King, although he knew it not, there was a large assemblage of conspirators in the Cathedral of Nôtre Dame in Paris to vow allegiance to the younger brother of Louis, Charles, Duc de Berry. Princes, great ladies, demoiselles, and squires were among the five hundred there assembled, who recognised each other as fellow-conspirators by wearing a silken thread in their waist-bands or belts.

The Bishop and Chapter of the Cathedral were doubtless all in the secret; nor is this to be wondered at when the King's recent investigations into the possessions of the Church are remembered. For the manner in which he had taken the disposition of the benefices into his own hands the King had now against him, not only the whole Church, but all those who depended upon the Church in any way. Louis had, however, boldly set himself to the task of curbing the greed of the clergy and of making them pay him

seigneurial dues upon much of that which they had gradually acquired and held. There was an old saying: "While the King is sleeping the Bishop on his little mule trots and trots, and all the land that he goes round becomes his. Soon he has a whole Province. The King is awakened with a start and told, 'Sire, if you don't look out the Bishop will have made the tour of the whole Kingdom.'"

Louis XI., whose ancestors had slept, himself had awakened with a vengeance, to poke his nose into the affairs not only of the Church but the *noblesse*, who had hitherto controlled the taxation in a way to suit themselves. By means of their favourites, the so-called *élus*, or elected ones, who were supposed to divide the taxation equally, the nobles had been able to excuse whom they liked, tax whom they liked. Finding that these *élus* were not really elected at all, but succeeded from father to son by the favour of the nobles, thus making a regular family matter of the taxation, Louis suddenly surprised the Kingdom by disgracing and suspending the whole of the *élus*. Then he reinstated them, but for one year only, after which he arranged for their regular appointment in such a manner as to abolish all heredity, and to keep an eye upon their proceedings, and moreover to ensure that, in future, it should not be only the poor who were taxed.

Thus it is no wonder if a league were formed against the King, or if many of those who were about his own person joined it, while protesting furiously against such unkingly practices, which neither they nor their fathers had ever heard of. The Magistrates of the Parliament were, however, mocked at by the

King. Thus Louis went on steadily in his own way, without consulting with any one, and, when he found the University of Paris inclined to assert itself, he soon contrived to put the learned and reverend doctors of which it was composed in their proper places. He had indeed neither love nor respect for the scholarly element, and thus promptly deprived the members of the University of all of that political importance which they had for long past arrogated to themselves.

In crushing the University of Paris the Universal Spider had his ulterior policy. He knew the tricks of the tonsured crew in making themselves subservient to the nobles, who had until his accession had so much to do with the ecclesiastical elections to benefices, and he was determined to break up any continuance of the combination. He detested combinations of any kind by which he found that his own hands were likely to be in any way hampered, and put them down accordingly, nor seemingly minded if he made numberless enemies in the process.

In order to restrict the powers of the magistrates who formed the Parliaments of Paris and Toulouse, and who were apt to combine with the nobility of the sword, this very arbitrary Monarch contrived to take the wind out of their sails. The country over which their respective jurisdictions extended was far too great, and such as to render the administration of justice for those at a distance impossible. How, indeed, was it possible for suitors in civil lawsuits to attend at the proper times to hear their cases tried, or appeals heard, when they lived three hundred miles away and there were no roads fit for them to travel over to reach the supreme Courts?

To remedy this state of affairs, and limit the pretensions of Paris and Toulouse, Louis made new Parliaments at Grenoble and Bordeaux, while over the Duchy of Normandy, notwithstanding a considerable outcry of the local lawyers, baillis, and other officials, he instituted the office of a Procureur-Général du Roi. The first Procureur-Général du Roi in Normandy was Cérisey, Vicomte de Carentan, and this supreme officer, who thenceforth controlled all the local Courts in the Duchy, took over his office on September 6, 1463. He was met by an universal complaint that his office was a new and unusual one, in spite of which the protestants had no choice left to them but to comply with the King's orders and submit to the newly imposed authority.

The King was, in short, determined to abrogate, curtail, or control all old institutions which he considered as out of date ; and, as he began, so he went on. His methods, stronghanded as they were, were distinctly revolutionary, and Louis, while firmly placing these old institutions quietly to one side on the shelf, and working as he did alone, may be said to have constituted a whole Revolution in himself.

CHAPTER XVIII

Louis forbids all Sport

1464

THAT Louis XI. was not without a sense of humour we know, and although he was more often apt to give way to this, in a very coarse manner, when among the low bourgeois society which he loved to frequent, there were times when he gave vent to it in a rather disconcerting manner.

One such was when the Canons of Loches, in whose cathedral was buried Agnès Sorel, his father's mistress, with whom he had so often quarrelled, sought to pay him a compliment. She had greatly benefited the Chapter of Loches by her munificence, but this did not prevent the Canons from approaching the King and begging him to remove the tomb of the fair favourite of Charles VII. from their sacred precincts.

Louis heard them quietly, then smilingly replied, with a touch of grim humour, "Certainly, I consent to remove the tomb of your benefactress, but of course you will also at the same time give up all that you ever received from her." Needless to say, the disconcerted Canons of Loches said no more about the matter, while, fortunately for them, the Prince, who was

ever so greatly in need of money, was contented with his joke at their expense.

It was, however, unusual for Louis to refer in any way to making anybody disburse without making good his threat, and he was always able to find tools ready to carry out his instructions to the letter.

With his revolutionary views, he had, as we have shown, rejected the past, and, in the main, its men and their ideas. He, however, soon contrived to find, to aid him in his schemes, clever but unscrupulous men of a class ready to walk straight under his instructions, even should their path seem to lead them to the gallows. These new men were merely his own creatures. Sometimes he selected them from among those of the past whom he had crushed at his accession. Having commenced by showing them their absolute nothingness without him, he remade them in his own fashion so as to become his humble servants. He admired and recognised strength, even when it had been employed to his own disadvantage. For this reason, after having given them a lesson, he selected such men for his tools as Pierre de Brézé or Antoine de Chabannes, Comte de Dammartin, who had been among his bitterest and most powerful enemies while he was still merely the Dauphin, and Chabannes again later, during the insurrection called the War of the Bien Public.

It pleased Louis to lift a man out of danger the more securely to bind him to himself. An instance of this had been seen in the case of Morvilliers whom we have mentioned as heading the embassy to the Duc de Bourgogne to complain of the Comte de Charolais. This Morvilliers, a Magistrate of the Parliament, was

accused of fraudulent behaviour by his fellow "men of the robe."

He was on his trial when the King caused all the papers connected with his accusation to be brought to him in a bag. Then he sent for Morvilliers.

"Now, my man," exclaimed Louis sternly, "what is it that you wish to have from me—justice or pardon?"

"Justice, Sire," replied the trembling Magistrate.

"Justice! all right!" replied the King, as he threw the whole bag-full of papers into the fire. "See that you do justice to others, for I make of you my Chancellor."

By behaving like this, placing a scamp whose crime had remained unpurged over the head of honourable men, Louis seemed to assert his claim that all right, all law and justice, dwelt in himself—that he alone was the fountain-head of all good or bad.

We say good or bad advisedly, for the unscrupulous son of Charles VII. was, when he saw a chance of making money, not above associating himself in the schemes of regular robbers and swindlers, whom he made disgorge and share their spoils with himself. Always in want of money for all kinds of reasons, public or private, open or secret, he yet spent hardly anything on his own personal expenses. He was one of the worst dressed men in his kingdom, and but rarely afforded himself the luxury of a new hat or cloak. Yet when it came to the necessity of paying immense sums to the Duke of Burgundy, the King of Castile, or the King of Aragon, to obtain some piece of coveted territory, he always contrived to obtain the necessary sums and to pay in cash.

Many of those whom he employed for his most intimate services were, however, often hardly put to it for funds wherewith to exist. These, however, he would help out occasionally with the funds of a Bishopric or an Abbey, while occasionally, when he heard of a great heiress who was unmarried, he would exert all of his powerful influence to have her handed over to the clutches of one of his myrmidons. The heiresses, however, sometimes eluded him. A case of this was when the Dowager-Duchess of Brittany refused to be married to a Prince of Savoy, and another when the daughter of a rich bourgeois of Rouen ran away and hid herself, and thus escaped marriage with the King's favourite valet de chambre.

The methods of Louis, as may be seen from the above, were much those of one of the Tyrants of the Italian States, for a Francesco Sforza, or a Ferdinand the Bastard of Naples was his beau-ideal. Although Louis XI. admired the glory of a Sforza of Milan, or the unbending wisdom of the rulers of Venice, in one respect he fell short of the Italian methods that he imitated. For, while these rulers attained their ends often only by the exercise of great patience, Louis was far more anxious and impatient to impose his will and to get his own way. Moreover, he often, despite his cunning, allowed this impatience to become apparent; and thus, by showing his hand too early, was subjected more frequently to rebuffs and set-backs to his policy.

In this feverish anxiety to reach the hoped-for goal, of which he never lost sight, Louis would have liked to have been able to behave as though

for him—for France—time did not exist. He forgot that the ages moved but slowly, and therefore often committed the error of judgment of carrying in his brain as close at hand a point which was in reality as yet but a long way ahead.

It was, in fact, impossible for a King of France, no matter how revolutionary his instincts, to establish in a moment, as a means of preserving order, an impartial tyranny which was to supersede all the tyrannies already existing. There were, for instance, the semi-independent Duchies and Counties, the old feudal laws of the Royal fiefs and the lesser fiefs, the brotherhoods and the guilds, the great clergy, the monasteries, the convents—all these with their own laws, their own methods of so-called government. With these discordant forces dragging against each other, kicking, biting, fighting one another along every inch of the road, how was it possible for one hand to break them all in in a hurry, so that they could at once be yoked together and driven meekly along in one and the same direction, while trembling under the same lash? And yet this is what Louis XI. sought to do. He made them all tremble, certainly, for all alike felt the same evil-conditioned eye to be watching them; but to make his unruly team draw the car of State peaceably along, without one or other of the steeds constantly making a bolt sideways or backwards, was altogether another matter.

With the advent to the throne of Louis XI. a new influence was felt, an active influence of modernity which may be considered as an abrupt awakening from the long sleep of the Middle Ages. The people of France of all classes, who were strongly inclined to

go on sleeping, not only resented this, but did not understand it. They felt but too plainly that it came with a malevolent spirit to disturb them all. In the old days many there had been who had been apparently too humble to have their affairs investigated; they had gone on in their own drowsy way, committing each one his own injustices in his own corner, unseen and uncared for. Now suddenly all was changed—an evil, wandering spirit was abroad in the land, one which wanted to know everything, which wanted further to make everybody pay up something. Surely the devil was abroad in the land! But how was he to be met with and overcome? that was the question. Who was to be the match of this Universal Spider, a weaving tyrant in whose web every one was afraid of finding himself before long hopelessly entangled.

Even the great and violent Comte de Charolais vaguely felt in Burgundy some of the terror by which all in France were inspired. For this reason was it that he would, if he could, have put his cousin, the Comte Jean de Nevers, to a cruel death by fire on a charge of sorcery. For he knew Jean to be hand in glove with the King, who smiled so pleasantly to a man's face, but set such devilish agencies to work behind his back. Charolais, better perhaps even than his father, the great Duc de Bourgogne, understood that the webs of the net were being constantly thrown out in all directions, and that Burgundy would have to look mighty sharp to avoid being entangled in its meshes—for it was everywhere.

In every direction some trace of this web, just a thread to bar the old road, was to be met with as a sign of the new power, the new King with devilish ways, who

would, with his strong hand armed, interfere with the ancient customs of the land. Whether it were in Dauphiné where, while ruling in his father's life-time, Louis had forbidden the waging of private wars, or in the newly annexed Rousillon or Perpignan, where he likewise forbade the old custom of drawing the sword at will, his orders were keenly resented by the nobility, while the guilds and brotherhoods of the bourgeoisie liked his new methods no more than the Seigneurs of high degree.

The shipbuilders of the seaports of Dieppe and La Rochelle hated the King for his new-fangled ideas in building a navy of his own instead of buying his ships ready made from them. The University of Paris hated him no less, since he had been malignant enough, in order to spite that body, to establish a new University at Bourges, which caught half of the pupils on their way to Paris. The workmen detested the King because he called foreign artisans into the country ; the merchants considered his practice of allowing Flemings and Dutch traders to establish themselves in France as nothing less than an abomination. With these causes for hatred against the innovations of their revolutionary ruler was another, in itself sufficient to render the King most unpopular with the aristocratic classes. This was his custom, already commenced in Dauphiné, of creating nobles from the lower orders, of also giving official rank to many of humble estate.

While the old nobility considered themselves dishonoured by seeing men from the law-courts, the Customs, or the farm allowed to swagger about with a sword like themselves, while fitted likewise with a resonant title, the old-time officials of the great cities,

such as Toulouse, resented no less the presence in their midst of all kinds of riff-raff to whom had been confided honourable charges. In the year 1467 the Estates of the Province of Languedoc gave vent to their grievances in a remonstrance to the effect that the King was appointing to charges shoemakers, blacksmiths, and crossbowmen.

As if he could not do enough to make himself unpopular, Louis, who was himself an ardent sportsman, suddenly devised an idea to restrain the old hunting rights of the Seigneurs, who had hitherto at will trampled under-foot the crops of the peasantry when in pursuit of game.

From time immemorial in France the Seigneur had looked upon himself as having unlimited power over the persons and properties of the peasants on his estate. A newly made bride was not even safe, but had to submit to the embraces of her lord before she passed to her husband's arms, should the lord choose to exercise his vile *droit de seigneur*. Whether the lord chose to exercise it or no, the blushing maiden was forced to the humiliation, upon leaving the altar, of proceeding to the Château, to present herself and inquire his lordship's will concerning her. Occasionally the Baron, disdaining the newly married girl, passed her over to one of his pages or followers. This horrible custom, be it remembered, existed in France until the time of the French Revolution at the close of the eighteenth century. When the nobles enjoyed such rights as these until the time of Louis XVI. we can imagine what an interference with their sporting rights must have seemed to the great landed proprietors of the time of Louis XI.!

For everything belonged to the Seigneur—the forest, the bird in the air, the fish in the water, the beast in the bushes, the water that flowed, the bell in the steeple that was within his hearing. That the game should be left unmolested to eat the peasant's crops was also the ancient right of the lord of the manor. Woe indeed to him who failed to respect it! woe still more to him who ventured to snare even a rabbit or destroy a pigeon on his own account! At his free will, with horses and hounds, the Seigneur might gallop over the farmers' lands, trample underfoot and destroy such vestiges of crops as the deer and the wild boars had not already eaten down or rooted up. The farmer, meanwhile, must stand hat in hand, and bow low, while his noble Seigneur, with his merry train, swept by his humble dwelling. And who would dare to touch these rights of the nobles, these hunting rights which had existed from time immemorial? Louis XI. said he would dare, and two chroniclers, Chastellain and Du Clercq, both declare that the King forbade all hunting throughout the Kingdom. Already in Dauphiné he had issued orders forbidding hunting and fishing except on payment to him for permission, and now he issued an edict in France to the same effect.

Not knowing of the order, or thinking that it would not apply to him under the circumstances, a great noble, the Sieur de Montmorency, who was entertaining the King, organised a day's sport in his honour. Great was his horror when Louis ordered all the nets and various other instruments which had been prepared for the capture of game to be collected in a heap and burned!

The King followed this up by ordering, with the delay of only four days, all the nets, snares, and traps in the Kingdom to be delivered up to the Royal Baillis, while the Princes and Seigneurs were forbidden to enter the forests and woods. He even went so far as to forbid any kind of hunting to persons of *every class*, under the penalty of suffering corporal punishment and fine. In order to show that he was very much in earnest, when Louis learned that a Norman gentleman had disregarded his orders and caught a hare on his own property, he caused the unfortunate man to have one of his ears cut off.

The report was soon spread that the King had interdicted all sport merely that he might himself enjoy all the sport that the Kingdom afforded, in company with his chosen friends and followers. For how long his orders to restrict hunting remained in force is uncertain, but his action in this matter proved the last straw. The Princes and great nobles, furious at the order of *plus de chasse*, raised the banner of revolt against the King, while a good number of the lesser nobility, seeing that for them there was now to be no more joy in life, that they were to be condemned to live as dull an existence as that of their peasants, flocked to the Princes' standards.

CHAPTER XIX

The Danger of the King

1465

ALTHOUGH, owing to his peculiar methods, Louis had contrived, in but a year or two after his accession, to make himself so well hated, he prided himself upon his justice.

That this really existed where the poor were concerned can be shown, even in some little matters, by a reference to the Archives of the Kingdom of France for the years 1469-70. There we find the following interesting charges against him in the registers of the accounts.

“ To the King our Seigneur, given by the Sire de Montaigu, one crown to be given to a poor man for that the said Seigneur caused a dog to be taken from him during the month of December last ; and one crown to be given to a poor woman because the greyhounds of the said Seigneur throttled a sheep near Nôtre-Dame-de-Lire. One crown to give to a woman, in recompense of a goose, that the King’s dog, named Muguet, killed near Blois. To the King again, given by Alexandre Barry, a man-at-arms of the Archers of the Guard, to give to a poor man near Mans, in recompense because the Archers of the Guard had spoiled

his wheat in making a short cut across his field to the high road, one crown. To the King, one crown, to give to a poor woman in recompense, because his dogs and greyhounds had killed her cat near Montloys, on the road between Tours and Amboise."

Thus Louis was evidently not without compassion; he still had manly instincts in the earlier portion of his reign. He is said to have loved his mother, and to have mourned her loss, and he had, at any rate, announced his intentions as being kindly and pacific. Legrand, in his historical manuscripts, makes the statement: "One has often heard it said that, as he drew much from the people, he wished, while emptying their purses, to spare their blood."

However pacific the King's intentions, he had now reached a point when he had unfortunately contrived to arouse a most powerful combination against himself. This, at the beginning of the year 1465, was to appear in arms against him, to wage a war which its leaders had the effrontery to call that of "Le Bien Public," or Public Welfare.

Louis XI., who was usually well informed of what was in the wind, was perfectly well aware of what the Princes were designing against him for their own selfish ends, while pretending to act solely in the interests of the Kingdom at large. The heads of this great feudal coalition were, in France, Jean II., Duc de Bourbon, Jean, Duc de Lorraine et Calabre (Duke of Calabria, son of King René of Anjou and claimant to the thrones of Naples and Catalonia), Jean II., Duc d'Alençon, the old Duc Charles d'Orléans and his half-brother the Comte de Dunois, the powerful Bastard of Orléans. With Dunois was soon associated

the old freebooter Antoine de Chabannes, who escaped from the Bastille on March 10th, 1465.

The Comtes d'Armagnac and Charles II. d'Albret were in the conspiracy also, while the King's *âme damnée*, Jacques, the Bastard of Armagnac, to whom Louis had recently given the great Duchy of Nemours, was likewise secretly unfaithful to him, as was the Comte de Saint-Pol. To these leaders in France were added, in Brittany, the Duc François II. and, in Burgundy, Charles, Comte de Charolais. As their nominal leader the Princes selected the King's eighteen-year-old brother, Charles de France, Duc de Berry. This figurehead was a mean and ugly-looking young man, vain, effeminate, and having but little intelligence. He was never anything but a plaything in the hands of the King's enemies so long as he lived, which was not long, as he died at the age of twenty-six. Commines says of him : " Monsieur Charles was a man who did little or nothing of himself, but in everything was worked and led by others."

Before the insurrection broke out Louis summoned the Princes to him, with his uncle King René and René's brother Charles, Comte du Maine, and took the trouble to try to justify himself in their eyes, both in the matter of the attempt to carry off Charolais and with reference to an accusation that he sought to poison his brother, who was still his heir. One of the causes of the revolt against the King was that a letter of his to Ferdinand the Bastard, the opponent of the Duc de Calabre in Naples, had been discovered, in which Louis promised to support him against the son of René. To this matter the King made no allusion, but boldly demanded what it was that the leaguers

wanted. He told them that the country was so peaceful and in such tranquillity that merchandise passed freely everywhere, while all were able to live peaceably. If more were needed, Louis pointed out that he himself was continually running about all over the Kingdom to discover its wants, while, as for the accusation of wishing to poison his brother, it was absurd, as he had no other male heir than Monsieur Charles. As for the imposts and taxes which they accused him of levying, they were for the good and glory of the realm, but that he would diminish them when he could. The King added that, as chief and father of all concerning the public welfare, he had more interest in doing this than any one.

Unfortunately for him, Louis had been compelled to allot huge pensions to the Princes and nobles, and, while these were in a large measure the cause of the taxation, all that they wished for was to have them increased, not diminished. All their talk about wishing for the welfare of the people was, in fact, a mere blind. If anything were likely to ruin the people it would be the civil war into which the country would be plunged; moreover, it was evident that it would expose the country to a possible new invasion by the English.

The English danger was a very real one, even although the Wars of the Roses were still being continued, as Edward IV. remained, since his marriage, in close intimacy with Burgundy. Louis, who had no friends near at hand, did therefore all that he could to court and flatter the Earl of Warwick. Although Warwick's influence had declined with the new King of England since his marriage to Elizabeth Rivers, or

Woodville, to his representations it was probably due that England remained neutral.

To the Pope, Pius II., Louis also sent off a flattering embassy, pointing out to the Pontiff that the Princes and great nobles were his enemies, who wished to re-establish the Pragmatic Sanction of Charles VII. in order once more to get into their own hands the disposition of the Church benefices, with the result that the Pope remained neutral in the quarrel that was brewing in France.

To return for a moment to the eloquent discourse to which Louis treated the Princes. As in it he took such pains to point out to them how much he had done, and was doing, to increase the boundaries of the Kingdom and the authority of the Crown, they felt, as they listened, only the more determined to revolt. Out of the twenty-eight Provinces into which France was then divided, the King could only be said to own fourteen, and the great Seigneurs were determined, if possible, to prevent him from asserting his paramount authority over the remainder. The Comte de Saint-Pol was by no means pleased that, with the recovery of the Somme cities, the King had retaken Picardy into his hands, nor were the Armagnacs by any means gratified that he had placed a Parliament at Bordeaux which asserted judicial rights over their formerly independent territories.

The Princes listened, however, with every appearance of humble submission to the King's words. Only when he attacked the Duc de Bretagne, saying that he it was who would call the English into France, did the old poet, Charles, Duc d'Orléans, venture to interfere on behalf of François II., who was his near kinsman.

The King cut short the old Duc's defence of the Duc de Bretagne. So withering and crushing was his reply that the old man was overcome, and did not long survive it. The others, however, hypocritically applauded the King's words *with tears in their eyes*, while King René, as the mouthpiece of all, made an appropriate reply, promising fidelity. He alone kept his word; the others left the Royal presence with rebellion in their hearts.

War was not, however, to be yet, for the Duc de Bretagne sent an embassy to Louis pretending that he wished for nothing so much as peace. At the head of this was the Duc's favourite, Odet d'Aydie by name. This noble persuaded Charles de France, Duc de Berry to fly with him to Brittany when the embassy retired, after which act of treachery there could be no further question of peace between Louis XI. and François II.

The conceited young Prince, from his secure retreat in Brittany, commenced at once to send manifestoes into France. Puffed up with his own importance, this callow youth summoned the vassals of France to take up arms, in order to establish the good Government which he alone was able to give to them. Without him, he declared, there could be neither justice nor policy, the country would be lost (March 15, 1465). A day or two later François II. also issued a manifesto, declaring himself the enemy of all enemies of the Comte de Charolais, not excepting the King of France (March 22, 1465).

A few days before the issue of either of these manifestoes Charolais had at length succeeded in establishing, not merely his independence, but his authority over his father, by getting rid of all the members of the

family of Croy. He had threatened them with death unless they at once cleared out of the Burgundian domains. One of them threw himself at the feet of his aged master, the Duc Philippe, who, vowing vengeance on his son, rushed out sword in hand, breathing death and destruction. None came, however, to his call to aid him against Charolais, who came himself humbly to make submission to his father. Philippe wept, father and son embraced, Antoine de Croy took his departure, and Charolais became thenceforth the actual ruler of Burgundy.

Once in the saddle as his father's Lieutenant Général, the terrible Charles the Bold did not lose time before commencing to ride. He issued an edict on April 24 demanding the presence under arms, not later than May 7, of all members of the nobility in Burgundy and the Low Countries. Nor was he disobeyed, his name was too greatly feared; and thus soon he had a large but ill-organised army at his disposal.

Before continuing further the recital of the events connected with this revolt, which was so similar to that of the Praguerie in which, twenty-five years earlier, Louis had himself joined some of the same malcontents against his father, Charles VII., it would be well to see what were the objects for which the Princes and nobles were rising in arms.

Those of the feudal coalition *professed* that they wished "to remedy the disordered and piteous Government, which ruined the country through the fault of the King's counsellors, people full of all badness and iniquities." They expressed indignation at the manner in which the King interfered with the rights of the nobles, against his forced marriages, declared that the

ecclesiastics were oppressed and molested, and that the "povre peuple" were crushed with taxes and flayed by the people of the law. They therefore expressed their intention to "succour the poor people." Jacques d'Armagnac, Duc de Nemours, went nearer the truth of their thoughts than this profession, when he declared, a little later, that "the King ought to keep the nobility and give them fat pensions."

The desire for the fat pensions was, as a matter of fact, the real cause of the greater number of the rebels taking part in the war *Du Bien Public*, although, when the coalition was first formed, it is more than doubtful if many of those engaged in it could see exactly in what way they would be able to profit by the hoped-for victory over the King whom they so detested.

Later on, during the course of the struggle, the Seigneur de Crèvecœur, a Burgundian noble who had been taken prisoner, spoke out and told what he had heard proposed in the circle which surrounded the Comte de Charolais. He said that it was proposed to make the King's brother, Berry, the Regent of the Kingdom, while, under him, the Ducs de Bretagne and Bourbon and the Comte de Charolais would assume the command of the Royal forces. Further, he said that these Princes would undertake the necessary reforms in the Kingdom of France. Of the three mentioned it will be noticed that two, François II. of Brittany and Charolais, were practically foreigners; moreover, although he was so closely connected with the French Crown on his father's side, the mother of Charolais was half Portuguese and half English. The Duc de Bourbon would be, therefore, the only one of the governing trio who would be a real Frenchman.

The real head of the insurrectionary league was, however, the sturdy Dunois, and a little later he most explicitly laid bare to delegates, who came from Paris, the unvarnished selfishness of the conspirators. He said that they "demanded the receipt, handling, and government of all the finances of the Kingdom, demanded to have in their hands and power and at their disposal the whole of the army of the Kingdom, demanded the knowledge of and distribution of all of the offices of the Kingdom, and finally demanded to have charge of the King's person and his Government." This was, to say the least of it, a pretty large order, and this statement, which must have given *furieusement à penser* to Louis, is from the Journal de Jean Maupoint. This Jean Maupoint appears to have kept an accurate diary of all the events in connection with the War of the Public Welfare, and it is chiefly from him that we are able to learn its most intimate details. Among other points, Maupoint mentions that there were, in all, twenty-one powerful Seigneurs and fifty-one thousand combatants in the army of the League.

Other chroniclers of the events of the war are Thomas Basin, the rebel Bishop of Puy, who was a bastard of Bourbon, the Burgundian Chastellain, and the Breton Meschinot. These two latter worthies collaborated early in 1465 in the composition of certain ballads, in which, in unmeasured terms, they paint Louis XI. as "a Prince who is perfidious, ungrateful, hypocritical, envious, and a tissue of malignity."

With such an evident bias against the King against whom the powerful combination was formed, it behoves the reader to accept their statements with

a caution which appears unnecessary when scanning the straightforward narrative of Jean Maupoint.

Among the great vassals of the period there were, apart from King René, but few who remained faithful to the King. The fidelity of his uncle Charles, Comte du Maine, proved more or less doubtful, as also was that of the Comte Jean de Nevers. Gaston IV. de Foix, however, proved thoroughly loyal and staunch, and kept the south of France in subjection. The Comtes d'Eu and de Vendôme likewise remained true to Louis, but they were not either of them able to lend him very much assistance.

Although there were many of the lesser nobility who threw in their lot with the Princes, there were many others who, from a wholesome fear of the King, wisely abstained from interference in the quarrel and shut themselves up in their houses. This was especially the case in the instance of the Knights and Squires of the Duc de Bourbon's great central province of Bourbonnais.

While the iron will of Charles de Charolais proved efficacious in keeping many of his lesser followers in arms against their will, the Duc de Bretagne encountered a good deal of opposition when raising an army. Many of the Bretons were indeed already enrolled in the forces of Louis XI., who alone at this time possessed a regular army, regularly paid and well disciplined. The Church as a whole was against the King, but, with the exception of several Norman Bishops, and a few from the central Provinces, the churchmen had more regard for a whole skin than to venture to cast in their lot against the Universal Spider. Most of the Bishops,

therefore, proved trimmers throughout the contest, contenting themselves with heading religious processions "in order that God might bring peace between the King and the Seigneurs of France."

Louis XI., when he became apprised that the warlike Jean de Calabre was recruiting an army in Provence, and the other leaders in other directions, kept his head and did not alarm himself unduly, although, if ever a King had cause for alarm he had at this fateful epoch. He calculated, and rightly, that the great feudal machine would not easily be got to work together, its parts being too incongruous, and hoped that, with his regular forces, he might be able to crush it piece by piece before its various parts were joined. While Jean de Calabre was obtaining the aid of arquebus-men from the Count Palatine, and Swiss and Italian mercenaries, Louis was likewise recruiting his army with mercenaries from Savoy, while Galeazzo Sforza, the son of his friend the Duke of Milan, brought him a well-equipped force of five thousand horse and foot. Thus early in the year 1465 the King was able to place himself at the head of a fine army of thirty thousand men, with which he at once took the field.

CHAPTER XX

The Battle of Montlhéry July 1465

THE scheme devised by Louis XI. of attacking the forces of the conspirators in detail was a thoroughly sound one, and he proposed to start by going, first of all, against that Prince of the Blood Jean II., Duc de Bourbon, in the centre. Should he get the better of Bourbon, then he would march up to Picardy to stop Charolais on his way towards Paris. The Bretons advancing on the Loire would, he felt sure, be slow in their movements, and his object would be to keep them from effecting a junction with Charolais. Unfortunately for Louis, he wrongly calculated that the enormous benefits that he had conferred on the Armagnacs would make them act loyally. While he marched off at once into Berry and Auvergne to check Bourbon, he reckoned upon the Gascons of Armagnac arriving to complete the discomfiture of Duc Jean II. there and in Bourbonnais, while he proceeded himself to meet Charles the Bold in the north. The ruling Comte d'Armagnac at that time was, however, that Jean V. who had created such a scandal by first making a mistress of his sister Isabelle and then

marrying her, and he was as unreliable as was the Duc d'Alençon in the north.

Accordingly, while Louis showed great celerity in his own movements, neither the Comte d'Armagnac nor the King's favourite, Jacques d'Armagnac, Duc de Nemours, hurried themselves in the least to join him.

Louis showed himself, however, to be a cunning warrior, and greatly disconcerted the Duc de Bourbon by his manœuvres. That Prince had shut himself up with a large force in the central city of Bourges, thinking that the King would be sure to delay to besiege him and not venture to leave this force behind him. This was not Louis' idea at all; he calmly walked past Bourges and took, in succession, four central cities, namely, Saint-Armand, Montrond, Montluçon, and Sancerre. This last-named place he gained without the least trouble, owing to the well-advised leniency with which he had treated Montluçon, from whence he had allowed the rebel troops to march out with all the honours of war, while leaving the inhabitants unmolested.

By the middle of May 1465, merely six or seven weeks after the opening of the campaign, Louis had, unaided, finished off Bourbonnais, Auvergne, and Berry, with exception merely of Bourges and the Duc's principal place of Moulins. But while the Armagnacs and the Gascons wrote specious letters but came not, Charolais was now able to send a General with the rank of Maréchal de Bourgogne into Moulins with a large reinforcement. This proved a set-back to the King, who throughout the war met indeed with little but treachery in all directions.

Nothing had he but his own resources to depend upon, and frequently no means of enforcing obedience to the orders which he sent to his lieutenants and which were repeatedly and traitorously disregarded. That eventually he came out of the struggle as well as he did was due, not only to his own courage and determination, but to the ineptitude, cowardice, and delays of his enemies.

For the good heart which Louis kept up during the *Guerre du Bien Public* he must be admired. That he was an extraordinary man must be conceded even by those who like him least. He showed it by the good grace with which he gave way at the end of the conflict, gave freely and with a smiling face to his enemies, while waiting with confidence for the time, which he knew would come to him, to upset their seeming successes and to be avenged upon such of the traitors as he considered worthy of his revenge.

The Duc de Nemours, one who had been his confidant, friend, and companion for some fifteen years, at length vouchsafed to put in an appearance with his forces; but he came with a heart full of perfidy. He halted at a distance from the King's camp, and proceeded to get into touch with the traitorous Bishop of Bayeux, an intriguing Norman who was there present.

This Bishop and M. de Châteauneuf, who had an important office about the King's person, were in constant communication with the Duc de Bourbon, and Nemours combined with them in seeking treacherously to upset the King's plans. The intriguing Bishop was even for blowing Louis up with gunpowder, but

this drastic measure did not meet with the views of the others concerned. Their scheme was merely one to terrify Louis into the dividing up of France so as to place large portions of it in the hands respectively of Bourbon, Nemours, Saint-Pol, Jean de Calabre, and Dunois. The King was, however, not yet to be frightened, no, not even when the Comte d'Armagnac, instead of coming to his aid as expected, calmly marched off with his six thousand Gascons and joined the Princes.

Then Louis, becoming exasperated, not only took Verneuil, but razed it to the ground, made a furious attack upon another town, which he carried after a four hours' assault, and marched suddenly to confront Bourbon and the other Princes at Riom.

Instead of accepting the offered battle, Bourbon retired to his strong place Moulins and opened negotiations for a truce in the centre of France. This was arranged by the agency of the Armagnacs, who now vowed their fidelity to the King.

Louis, having given his truce to Duc Jean II., now hurried off to the north, fearing greatly that Charolais might have got to Paris before him. For, while the King had been conducting his successful campaign, Charolais had marched in from Burgundy through the north of France with a large force and much artillery.

As he gave out that he came for the good of the people, and paid for all the provisions he took, he found but little opposition from the cities on the way to Paris. Jean de Nevers, moreover, did nothing to defend the Somme from his cousin.

Everywhere the Comte proclaimed that he was



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merely acting as the lieutenant of the King's brother, the Duc de Berry, and in that capacity he declared the taxes, notably the hated *gabelle*, or salt tax, abolished. On arrival at Lagny he freely distributed the salt from the Government salt granaries ; moreover, he burned the registers of the names kept there for taxation purposes.

Thus Charles the Bold made himself popular as he advanced, and at the beginning of July he arrived at Saint-Denis, near Paris. The King was still at a distance of several marches, the tricky Armagnacs having, with the Duc de Bourbon, purposely delayed the truce negotiations in order to keep him back.

Greatly the King feared now for Paris, where both the present and the last Duke of Burgundy had always been most popular, while he himself had treated the various bodies in the city but shabbily, as we know.

He had left Charles de Melun as his lieutenant in the city, with him being the Maréchal Joachim Rouault, and these two officers kept an eye upon the partisans of the Princes within the walls, although Melun was himself at heart more than half a traitor. The greater number of the middle-class inhabitants of the great city were, however, greatly to their surprise, found to be opposed to the Princes, and Charolais was vastly disappointed when he found that the gates were not immediately opened to him when he placed a couple of culverins in position and commenced firing at the walls.

Had the Comte Jean de Nevers but served the King properly, Charolais ought never to have reached Paris at all. Jean de Nevers had, however, not felt it in his heart to fight against his brother Burgundians,

and had remained inactive at Péronne, while writing to the cousin who loathed him and asking him to leave him alone. His cousin replied shortly, ordering him to place no garrison in Péronne, and, before he had time to reconsider matters, Jean de Nevers found himself likely to become a prisoner.

When Charolais found that the noise of his cannons did not alarm the Parisians or cause them to run and open the gates, he sent four heralds with soft words to the Gate Saint-Denis. He said he had merely come to consult with the Princes about the public welfare, not to attack anybody at all. He wanted, however, the promise of the delivery of two men into his hands. One of these was Jean de Nevers, and the other Morvilliers, the Chancellor. While the heralds were being listened to attentively by some bourgeois captains at this gate, the Comte had sent some of the Burgundians round to attack another gate, that of Saint-Lazare. Here they got more than they bargained for. Joachim Rouault, who was a soldier of the rough-and-ready species, was soon on the spot to receive them rudely, and he drove them back from the gate.

The rank and file of the Comte's newly raised army were as disconcerted and disappointed as their leader, for this was by no means the kind of reception they had been anticipating at Paris, which city carefully remained with her gates closed while the Burgundians sat down outside to think.

They began to think that it was a long way from home, and that there were several large rivers to be recrossed before they could get there. They thought, further, that as they had spent the best part of a day in front of the walls of Paris, and no enemy had dared to

come outside to fight them, they would do well to start back at once and leave such craven people alone to their cowardice.

The Duc de Bretagne and the Duc de Berry, who were still a long way off, on the other side of Paris, at Vendôme, might see what they could do with these unmannerly Parisians if they chose, but, as for the Burgundians, they had no use for them.

They were still considering what they should do, when an express messenger arrived in the Burgundian camp with a letter. It was sent by a lady of high degree, who was a sympathiser with the cause of the Princes, to say that the King was coming, and advancing rapidly. The Comte de Saint-Pol, who was with Charolais, now spoke strongly against a retreat, by which he stood to get nothing, whereas he wanted a great deal.

"Stand," said Saint-Pol, "and fight it out with the King like men!"

Saint-Pol himself advanced and took the bridge of Saint-Cloud, the Burgundian army crossed the Seine and commanded all the lower part of that river. While the Burgundians would now be able to obtain provisions, Paris realised that it might starve. The inhabitants now sent heralds in turn to talk to the people of M. de Charolais at the Gate of Saint-Honoré, but the Comte's delegates made so many foolish excuses for remaining at the open gate that the King's people within became frightened. They caused the bourgeoisie to close the gate, after the Burgundians had been supplied in turn with all the paper, parchment, ink, sugar, and drugs that they demanded.

Meanwhile, on July 14, 1465, messengers arrived from the King saying that he would reach Paris in a couple of days at the latest, and begging Charles de Melun to send out to meet him twelve hundred horsemen under the Maréchal de Rouault. The Burgundian camps were much scattered, and the orders of Louis were that, while he attacked on one side, Rouault with his men-at-arms was to make an onslaught on the other. During the conflict, whether it should prove successful or no, the King would enter Paris.

Commines says that he felt assured that, if only he could get into the city first, he would save the Crown on his head. "Should he have failed to do so," relates Commines, "he has often told me that he would have retired towards Switzerland or to Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, whom he reckoned his firm friend."

On July 15 the skirmishers covering the front of the King's army got into touch with the outposts of Charolais at Arpajon, and there was a little fighting, and early on the morrow Louis, arriving with his army, which was inferior in numbers to that of the Comte, at Montlhéry, found himself checked by the Burgundian advance-guard, which the main body was hurriedly rejoining. Unable to advance towards Paris, Louis, having posted himself with his troops in a tower protected by a hedge and a good ditch, waited for four hours to see the Maréchal de Rouault issue from Paris with his men-at-arms. But he did not appear, for the simple reason that Charles de Melun had treacherously failed to send him!

Louis knew that his troops were good and reliable, but he felt more than ever uncertain of his leaders.

Had it not been for the ditch in front of them he feared that they would lead the men-at-arms over to the enemy. Pierre de Brézé commanded the King's advance-guard, Charles, Comte du Maine, was the leader of the rear-guard, but—could either of them be trusted? While Paris thus showed no sign of declaring herself in his favour, Louis feared that the rear-guard might fall upon himself and destroy him!

Still not a loyal man was seen to issue from the walls, accordingly the King sent out urgent messengers at a gallop to tell Charles de Melun that there was not a moment to be lost.

What was the answer that he then received from his brave lieutenant? The calm reply given to the messengers by Charles de Melun was to the effect that the King had ordered him to defend Paris; that, if he would answer for the city, he could not afford to spare a man from the walls!

The messengers thereupon rode about the streets, calling loudly to the Parisians that the King was in danger, and begging them to come out at once to his aid. The reply made by the Parisians was to go inside their houses and shut their doors.

The Burgundians meanwhile foolishly waited, while drawn up in battle-array. They expected that Pierre de Brézé would come every minute to join them, they hoped to see Charles du Maine suddenly declare himself in their favour. As he did not do so, the Comte de Saint-Pol sent a herald to Maine to tell him to hurry up and come over—for was he not a friend? After hours of waiting the Burgundians at length decided to advance, thinking that their friends with

the King's troops must then surely make up their minds and come over to their side.

Thereupon Brézé suddenly proved himself to be loyal. The King had lately reinstalled him in his old post of Sénéchal de Normandie, had also made him Captain of the city of Rouen, had even given him for his son in marriage an illegitimate half-sister of his own, with a large dowry. He had been completely won over to the Royal interests by these favours, and was determined to show that he was a true man. Notwithstanding the fact that the King, who probably still had his doubts, begged Brézé not to advance, he formed up his men-at-arms in battle-array and placed himself at their head. He was a man who always joked about everything, and he had just told the King, in a laughing manner, in reply to his anxious inquiries, that it was true enough that the Princes had his promise in writing. "But," he added in a merry manner, "the body shall remain with you, Sire." Then he gave the order to his splendid men-at-arms to advance at a trot, and then, increasing the pace, rushed forward at a charge upon the Burgundians. Brézé fell at the shock, being the first man killed at the battle of Montlhéry, and thus the King indeed had his body!

Another instance of the joking propensity of Brézé is recorded by Lenglet, and again it was a jest made with the King. He said one day to Louis, as they were riding together: "How well mounted is Your Majesty! I doubt if there is another horse in the Kingdom of France as strong as your hackney."

"Why is that?" replied the astonished King, who, as it happened, was riding a horse of rather a light build.

"Because he carries your Majesty and all the King's Council," answered Brézé.

To return to the battle, Brézé had commenced it and fallen gallantly, but it now behoved Louis to back up his advance-guard. The King did so, and, charging in turn, fell upon the Comte de Saint-Pol. Louis drove him and his men-at-arms before him to a wood, in which, having entered, Saint-Pol is said to have considered that it would be wise to remain until he saw which way the day should go. The Comte de Charolais, with a very large force of *gens d'armes*, however, now charged upon the King in turn, and, after forcing him back towards the height from which he had descended, passed on beyond the King's flank to charge upon a wing of the King's forces, which he overthrew.

The Comte du Maine should now have been at hand to support the King. He was not, however, to be seen; that Prince had, in a treacherous manner, executed a strategic movement to the rear with the whole of the rear-guard, consisting of several thousand men! The Comte de Charolais, having once got at the gallop, seemed unable to stop. He went on and on for a mile and a half past the King, and was very nigh to falling into a fresh body of the King's troops of which he was unaware. Upon his return he was in great danger, and twice wounded, once by an infantry soldier with a pike in the stomach and once by a sword-thrust in the throat, when charged by some men-at-arms. The Comte was seized and almost captured, when suddenly a very heavy horseman on a heavy horse charged violently in among those who were surrounding him and effected his rescue. The

name of the man-at-arms who so gallantly saved the future Charles the Bold of Burgundy was Jean Cadet, and he was the son of a Parisian doctor who had joined the Burgundian forces.

The Comte de Charolais was not too badly wounded to be able to show his gratitude to his preserver; but, when he had been aided to dismount, dubbed Jean Cadet a Knight upon the field of battle.

The situation on the field of Montlhéry was now peculiar. No great bravery had been shown by the Burgundians as a whole, and the Comte de Charolais was left with but a small surrounding of fighting-men, the rest having dispersed in various directions. Independent small fights were taking place here and there, but there was no cohesion, and a great part of each army had fled. The King and the Comte both, however, remained on the field, although the former was greatly weakened by the defection of Charles du Maine, who had, by the way, been paid in advance with all the estates of Dunois to remain faithful.

Neither knew which was the victor. The people of Burgundy having some of them rallied, as evening came on suddenly became scared, and, while closing in around their baggage-wagons, imagined that they saw the fires of a large force of the King's troops lying between them and Paris. Commynes, who was with them, frankly owns that they were frightened out of their wits, and thought of nothing but burning their wagons and provisions and making a rapid flight.

While in this uncertain condition Saint-Pol, who had himself feared the worst, suddenly discovered that, instead of camping between them and Paris, the King

had drawn off his whole force. Being frightened at receiving no assistance from the city, Louis had retreated to Corbeil with his remaining troops. Had Charolais now boldly marched upon Paris he would undoubtedly have been admitted. Instead of so doing, he foolishly encamped where he was, while boasting that he was the victor, as he held the ground of the field of battle, from which Louis had fled. While the Comte was causing his victory to be announced by his heralds, the wily Louis rode to the gates of Paris and asked for admission. The gates were opened to him, and, without upbraiding him for his conduct, Louis asked the worthy Charles de Melun to give him some supper.

CHAPTER XXI

The War of Individual Welfare

1465

BEFORE the actual commencement of the campaign, as a means of vexing the Duc de Bourgogne in his own country, Louis had sent to make an alliance with the people of Liége against the Houses of Burgundy and Bourbon, to which latter belonged the foolish young Prince-Bishop of Liége imposed upon the Liégeois by Philippe le Bon.

The treaty was signed by Louis de Laval on behalf of the King on June 17, 1465, and in it Louis promised to pay to Liége the wages and upkeep of two hundred lances, furnished—that is, at four men to a lance, of some eight hundred mounted men. The King further promised the Liégeois that he would make no peace with the members of the League in which Liége should not be included. The consequence was that the turbulent people of Liége, with those of their subject city of Dinant, rose in arms and, just after the battle of Montlhéry, which Louis sent to inform them was a victory for him, sent a declaration of war to Philippe le Bon. This they followed up by ravaging his territories, which they could venture safely to do in the absence of the Comte de Charolais

with all the available troops. For these actions they were to suffer later, while finding out the worthlessness of the King's promises; but in the meantime, as a cause of disturbance to Charolais, the success of his manœuvres concerning Liège afforded Louis the most complete satisfaction.

He, when once in Paris, did not at first find his position very strong. The people, who had seen the King come in with but few followers, did not believe much in the victory of which he boasted. Some thirty thousand bold Parisians issued, however, from the walls to go and attack the wounded and flying, and to pillage the dead, and, returning laden with spoils of the battle-field, boasted that they were themselves the victors of Montlhéry.

The King, seeing that the attitude of those within the walls was but doubtful towards himself, thought it wisest to cry low at first before their audacity. When they told him to retain Charles de Melun as his lieutenant in Paris, he accordingly agreed with a good grace; agreed also when the Bishops and members of the Parliament and others represented to him that it would be well for him to allow himself to be aided in his Government by a “good Council” of Parisians.

Nothing, exclaimed Louis, could suit him better than this good Council; accordingly he cheerfully allowed himself to be saddled with a body consisting of six bourgeois, six *conseillers* of the Parliament, and six clerics of the University.

At the same time he flattered the Parisians to the top of their bent, remitted their taxes, and promised that he would arm the whole populace, by which actions and promises the people were much gratified.

Having got the lower orders upon his side, Louis found himself able to indulge in a little vengeance upon those whom he knew to be traitors. Of these, some spies were drowned in the Seine, and others cut in quarters, as an example. Louis was not, however, strong enough to stamp out treason wholesale, although he distrusted the whole of the higher bourgeois element, and knew that the garrison itself was not to be relied upon.

His show of confidence in the people, while being the merest game of bluff, was the wisest that he could play in the circumstances, Charles the Bold being still encamped outside the walls, boasting of his victory, while the Ducs de Bretagne and Berry, both delicate Princes, were advancing by leisurely marches to join the Burgundian. While Louis bluffed and pretended to love being ruled by the Parisians, his enemies, fearing to attack the city, did not know just what to do. They effected a junction, however, before long at Étampes, but still did not know what to do. The now combined forces of Bretons and Burgundians accordingly delayed a fortnight for the arrival of the Duc de Bourbon, and the Armagnacs, who had remained with him, and then waited again for the Maréchal de Bourgogne who had been fighting with the King's troops and getting the worst of it, which caused him to come by a roundabout way. The allies had even then to wait longer, as they could not resolve upon making a definite move without the warlike Jean, Duc de Calabre et Lorraine. He also was fighting on the way, but at length arrived with his army of Lorrainers, Germans, people from Provence, Swiss, and Italians.

There was now an extraordinary conglomeration of peoples and tongues in the allied camps, the inmates of which did not by any means get on too well together, while to procure food for such an enormous body of men became, after a short time, almost an impossibility.

The old hatred between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians, which had resulted in such prolonged war in the past, was supposed to be extinct, but the detestation of the north for the south had, as a fact, by no means died out, and the more cleanly Burgundian and Fleming soldiery looked with horror upon the unwashed and ill-disciplined Gascon infantry, who were, as in days gone by, half savages and wholly brigands. Such was the disgust caused by the dirty followers of Armagnac that those of the other races assembled insisted upon the Gascons camping in a place well apart.

Nor did the Bretons and the Burgundians get on well together, especially as, while the Bretons had arrived too late for the fight, the Burgundians, half of whom had run away during the conflict, vaunted their bravery and prowess at the battle of Montlhéry.

Matters soon reached such a pitch in the rival camps that the Bretons of all ranks were anxious to fall upon the men of Burgundy, just to humble their pride and show them that they were not the only soldiers in the world.

As for the young Duc de Berry, who was supposed to be the leader of this incongruous collection of armed men, he was in fact distrusted by most and despised by all. Where Berry was concerned, the leaders of

Burgundy and Brittany combined to agree to curb him in the future, after the King should have been subdued. Charolais even entered into a private treaty with François II. concerning this, and paid the Duc a sum of money in advance for the future support that he should give to crush the King's brother.

Thus the camp of Étampes consisted not only of those who were traitors to Louis XI., but traitors to each other.

While the conspirators were squabbling among themselves, Louis was gradually gaining strength and getting troops together in Paris. He was afraid, as yet, to do any personal injury to Charles de Melun, but he removed him from his lieutenancy and replaced him by a faithful Prince of the Blood, the Comte d'Eu, who brought him several hundred lances. In the meantime he lavished gifts upon Charles de Melun, and thus dulled the suspicions of that traitor.

From Normandy Louis had assembled a goodly number of the free archers, but he found that the Norman nobility would not come at his call. The King, therefore, determined upon a bold move. Knowing Paris to be still shaky, he yet determined to leave Paris, in order to reassure the city by procuring reinforcements and provisions from without.

Having good intelligence of the enemy's movements, and having heard that the forces of the conspirators had been forced to separate and march off in different directions in order to obtain food for their men and forage for their numberless horses, Louis suddenly quitted Paris on August 10 and hurried into Normandy.

While he was away the different leaders joined

forces again sooner than the King had expected at Lagny, and got into touch with the shaky Parisians. These now tried to persuade the Comte d'Eu, the new Royal lieutenant, to arrange a peace with the Princes in the King's absence. While d'Eu put off the men of the Parliament, the University, Church, and bourgeoisie with fair words and promises, the Duc de Berry's heralds arrived at the gates of Paris, asking the city to send out some notables to hold a conference. Thirteen deputies went out at once, headed by the Bishop of Paris, the remainder being eminent men, and among them being Courcelles, who had been a judge at the trial of Joan of Arc thirty-four years earlier.

This deputation held a long conference with the Comte de Dunois at the Château de Beauté-sur-Marne, which had formerly belonged to Agnès Sorel, and after which place that favourite of Charles VII. had been nicknamed the Dame de Beauté. By the side of Dunois the deputies saw Charolais seated, armed from head to foot, and with a terribly frowning countenance; but by the Bastard of Orléans they were received with the greatest courtesy.

Dunois told the deputies from Paris that it went greatly to his heart to have to inform them that, unless the city consented to receive the Princes on the following Sunday—it being then Friday—on the Monday a general assault would be made by all the assembled armies, of which they could see the encampments as far as the eye could reach.

Upon their return to Paris the notables were paralysed at the report of the deputies, and the general opinion was that it would be very impolitic

to refuse to allow the Princes to come in, but each with a guard of only four hundred men-at-arms, and it was decided to send this message to the Princes. The Comte d'Eu meanwhile called out all of his troops in a review, and they formed a goodly army. Seeing these troops, and fearing d'Eu, the deputies consulted him before going back to Dunois. When they eventually returned to Beauté the message that they bore was not from Paris, but from the Comte d'Eu, and to this effect: "That it did not please the people of the King who are in Paris to send any reply before they had learned what was the King's pleasure."

The reply sent by Dunois was that an assault would be delivered on the morrow. Instead of any assault taking place, on the following day it was the Comte d'Eu who made a sortie, and returned after a skirmish with sixty horses that he had captured!

The allies continued to show their ineptitude by remaining inactive, until, a day or two later (August 28), the King returned, after a most successful visit to Normandy. For what earthly reason the armies of the Princes did not attack him while on the line of march is unknown, but Louis marched into Paris unmolested with an army of twelve thousand men, sixty wagons of powder, a number of cannons, and an immense quantity of flour, wine, bread, and all sorts of eatables, while, as he now held the Seine, more could be procured.

Upon his return the King immediately sent off into exile five of the deputies who had most compromised themselves during his absence; but Paris, being now assured of food, he felt to be safe, while

the allies were beginning to be more than hungry. In spite of their numbers they had not taken the precaution of securing either the Upper or the Lower Seine, whence food supplies might have been obtained. The result was that the starving soldiers were roaming about in all directions, while robbing the vineyards of the unripe grapes, which made them ill. A little later, when there was a truce between the combatants, many of the Parisians made a good thing by selling provisions to the besiegers, while even before the truce the Comte du Maine, within the walls, occasionally sent presents of vegetables to his nephew, Charles de France, outside.

Having now a goodly force, Louis XI. thought it as well to make a pretence of being about to do something with it. He solemnly received the "Oriflamme," or sacred standard from the Cardinal-Abbot of St. Denis, when, instead of following it into battle, he took care of it in his hôtel of Les Tournelles. A battle was never to the fancy of Louis XI. if he could gain his ends by negotiation; accordingly, while being publicly very attentive to his religious duties, Louis was secretly at this time in constant communication with one or other of the leaders of his opponents, and trying to detach them from each other. He was, in fact, bargaining all the time, by which means he sometimes gained a few adherents; but his enemies were bargaining also, with the result that some of the King's party went over to them.

The King, however, was the more liberal in his promises, and he commenced to laugh at his foes in his sleeve as they began to suffer more and more, to become more and more discontented with one another.

Before long the Armagnacs began to come to him of their own accord, to make complaints of the Princes, while after the Armagnacs it was that arch-intriguer, the Comte de Saint-Pol, who came secretly to see the King, and held a long conversation with him. Saint-Pol had but one object before his eyes, and it was the sword of the Constable of France. It seems more than likely that Louis, who received his enemies blandly and amicably, promised him the great position that he sought before they separated.

Meanwhile King René gave to his son, the Duc de Calabre, the advice that he would do well to make his own arrangements with the King, without bothering his head any longer about the concerns of either Duc François II. or Charolais. Jean de Calabre took heed of the paternal counsels, and soon he in turn had obtained a secret understanding with Louis.

Thus August passed away into September, and, beyond an occasional cannon-shot from one side or the other, there was no fighting. There were, however, occasional night-scares and false alarms, when those of both sides put on their armour and mounted their war-horses in a hurry ; but, with the exception of a man or two being killed now and then, these came to nothing.

Tired of this armed truce, the Princes at last asked for a real truce, which the King granted, and with this truce the Princes began to open their mouths and make the most exorbitant demands upon the King.

Louis thereupon decided to treat. He was by no means sure of the provincial towns, where the Seigneurs were omnipotent ; moreover, treachery was making

headway and defections from his cause were daily increasing. The Comte du Maine, his uncle, without leaving the King's party, made a separate arrangement with the other Princes on September 18, the Captain of that most important place, Pontoise, gave it up to those of the League on the 21st of the same month, while on October 3 Jean de Nevers allowed himself to be taken in Péronne, when the Burgundians took possession of that city. The castle of Rouen was surrendered to the League at about the same time by the Bishop of Bayeux, who persuaded Brézé's widow to yield the citadel to the forces of the Duc de Bourbon, and thus Louis had become aware of the fact that, without any fighting, he was rapidly losing his Kingdom piecemeal.

Accordingly, the subtle Louis determined to yield to the Princes all that they demanded, with the secret intention of taking back later anything that he could obtain.

Their most important demand was that he should give to his young brother Berry the Royal Duchy of Normandy, while making it once more an independent Dukedom as of old. To this he made up his mind to agree. He held a personal interview with Charolais under the walls of Paris, in which little was said about the "Public Welfare." "Indeed," remarks Commynes drily, "that was the least part of the question, for the public welfare had been converted into the individual welfare."

The Duc de Bretagne was content, in the treaty made at Conflans, with the recognition of his rights over the Breton Bishoprics, but Charolais regained, for himself, all of the cities of the Somme, various

other towns and the Counties of Guines, Péronne, Montdidier, and Roye. Saint-Pol was granted the Constable's sword and 24,000 livres in cash, and most of the other great conspirators were rewarded in like proportion for their treason. Thus ended the War of the Bien Public (October 1465).

CHAPTER XXII

How Louis XI. treated his Brother 1465—1466

AT the termination of the war of the Public Welfare everybody appeared to go home satisfied, with exception of the two members of the House of Armagnac and the Sire d'Albret, who went back to the south dissatisfied, having obtained but very little or nothing as the result of their disloyalty. However, they were compelled to put up with circumstances as they were, for the others, being satisfied, were not going to war again on their account. Concerning their discomfiture Commynes remarks philosophically, "There was never yet such a good marriage feast but that some dined badly."

As for the Comte de Charolais, Louis hypocritically petted and made much of him, even going so far as to offer him his two-year-old daughter Anne, to replace his wife Isabelle de Bourbon, who had recently died. While this offer did not attract a man who was thirty years old, yet, according to the Comte's secretary, "The King said that he loved my said Seigneur more than any living soul." Such unlimited hypocrisy is indeed amusing, and amusing must it have seemed to the onlookers to behold Louis and Charolais embrac-

ing each other tenderly, the better to carry out the farce of the newly born love between them.

The Duc de Bourbon, who had begun the war, was now selected by the King for especial favour. He was the brother-in-law as well as the blood connection of Louis, having married his sister Jeanne de Valois. In fact, nearly all concerned on one side or the other during this selfish insurrection were closely connected with each other by ties of marriage, which circumstance did not, however, weigh in the least in that day when personal interests were hung in the balance.

Louis had made up his mind that it would be distinctly to his advantage in the future to have Jean de Bourbon for a close ally, the more so because, Jean's mother being the sister of Philippe le Bon, he was the first cousin of Charolais. The King accordingly lavished honours upon his lately rebellious brother-in-law, making him Lieutenant Général of all the central Provinces of France, which meant placing a quarter of the Kingdom in his hands. Louis also found himself compelled to change his policy towards the Duke of Calabria and Lorraine; thus he vowed for the future to support Jean d'Anjou in all his pretensions to Naples and Catalonia.

Dunois also had to be conciliated; therefore all of his goodly acres, which had been made over to the Comte du Maine before the recent outbreak, were restored to the Bastard of Orléans. Nor was Antoine de Chabannes, Comte de Danmartin, to be forgotten, and that old freebooter was made happy by the restoration of his wide possessions, which had been sequestered upon his confinement in the Bastille.

According to the treaty signed at Conflans Louis had promised to assemble a commission of thirty-six members, headed by Dunois, to aid him in establishing the necessary reforms in the Kingdom. No one, however, objected when he did not assemble this body. When he did so eventually, a year later, it was merely in order to make it the instrument of his vengeance. For the unfortunate people of France the only result of the War of the Bien Public was that their misery was increased. The inhabitants of the County of Champagne had suffered terribly during the war, from the ravages of the brigands who had followed in the train of the Sire d'Albret and the Armagnacs, and with the peace, in order to pay the immense pensions promised to the great Seigneurs, the taxes were enormously increased. Picardy and the Isle of France had been pillaged from end to end by the Burgundians, and thus the most terrible poverty and starvation was the sole portion of the greater number of the poor people to redress whose grievances those of the League had professed to rise in arms. To make matters worse, the country was now, as of old, roamed over by armed bands of brigands, and all security of the roads had disappeared.

In ceding Normandy to his brother in order to please his enemies, Louis had appeared to ruin himself; but, as a matter of fact, he had merely done so when the state of affairs in Paris had become so agitated that he had realised that, if peace were not made, there would be an insurrection within the walls, or, at all events, a civil war between the bourgeois and the Norman troops that he had introduced, who were inclined to pillage the inhabitants.

Moreover, in order to have peace, he had been forced to yield the Duchy, as it was the one point upon which the King's enemies were all agreed. The Bishop of Puy, who was one of the conspirators, has given a reason why the Leaguers were so determined that Berry should be put in possession of Normandy. This was that, with Brittany on the one side and Burgundy possessing the other, the whole of the north of France could be easily defended against Louis XI., and, further, that it would be easy to call in the aid of Edward IV. from across the Channel. Louis saw this point plainly enough also, and for that very reason determined to retake his new appanage from his brother Berry upon the first opportunity—nor was that opportunity long in presenting itself.

Before the great allied army departed from before Paris, the Comte de Charolais paraded the King in an amiable manner before its drawn-up ranks, which extended from Charenton to Vincennes. Having assembled all of the leaders around himself and Louis XI., Charles the Bold remarked, with an amiable smile, "Gentlemen, you and I belong to the King, our Sovereign Seigneur, to serve him on every occasion that he may have need of us."

The King looked as pleased as if he believed it all, the assembled Seigneurs bowed pleasantly in assent, and the incident closed.

This did not, however, prevent these same Seigneurs from taking certain precautions against this King to whom they so amiably vowed their services. Before departing for their respective homes they compelled Louis to sign a document to the effect that he could

not compel any one of them to come to see him, and, further, that should he propose to visit any one of them, he would give him three days' warning.

By the beginning of November 1465 Charles de France, now Duc de Normandie, had taken possession of his Duchy, and in the beginning of December Thomas Basin, Bishop of Puy, placing the ducal ring on his finger, solemnly married him to Normandy in the Cathedral of Rouen. The Prince was now practically in the position of an independent King; there were, in fact, two Kings in France. The Duc de Bretagne had accompanied Prince Charles into his new appanage, reckoning that he would be able to distribute all the offices in the government of the Duchy to his own creatures. Some of the companions of Charles and the great lords of Normandy, however, proposed to share these charges among themselves, in which ideas they were supported by the Duc de Bourbon, who required places in Normandy likewise for his own partisans.

The consequence was a quarrel. François II. retired to Caen in a huff, while some of his unruly Breton soldiers amused themselves by pillaging the Normans. Very soon the King, who was on a pilgrimage of devotion to Cléry, received a letter from his brother complaining bitterly of the conduct of the Breton Duke. This gave Louis the chance that he was looking for. He was with the Duc de Bourbon, now his bosom friend, and, turning to him, he handed him the letter, while saying, "I think that I shall have to take back my Duchy of Normandy. I must go and help my brother."

To help his young brother Louis determined

to retake the strong places in the Duchy by force of arms, and he entered accordingly at once into friendly relations with the Duc de Bretagne, who had sent him an embassy to complain of Prince Charles.

Owing to the success of his devices in having stirred up the people of Liège and Dinant against Philippe le Bon, Louis knew that Charolais would have his hands full upon his return to his father's dominions, and thus be unable to interfere with his designs. Liège was indeed now going to pay for what Louis had done, and even, if he had wished to interfere to protect her from Burgundy, the King was powerless to do so. He lost no time, however, in invading Normandy with the Duc de Bourbon, and in a short campaign of two months broke down completely the resistance of the Norman nobility and clergy, and deprived his brother of the Duchy. The King now merely offered the brother whom he had dispossessed the small appanage of Rousillon in the very south (January 1466). Thereupon Charles fled to François II. in Brittany, with whom he completely patched up his recent quarrel, for strange indeed was the way in which alliances were made, broken, and remade at this epoch in the history of France.

While publishing a manifesto to excuse himself for his action in thus breaking his promises, Louis, no longer clement as when he had obtained admission to Paris, now set to work to take a cruel revenge upon those who had proved his brother's friends in Normandy. If he had not shown himself equally pitiless in Paris upon his first entry, it had been merely from fear. He now, however, signalised his triumph in

Normandy by ordering his Provost-Marshal to hang, drown, and behead various officers and other persons of high degree. Many ecclesiastical dignitaries were deprived of their benefices and banished, among them being Thomas Basin, while all of the office-holders in Normandy were ruthlessly deprived of their charges.

The time had now come for the King to remember one or two others with whose conduct he had not had cause to be pleased during the recent war. The first of these was his uncle Charles, Comte du Maine. Him he punished by depriving him of the great Province of Languedoc.

Under the advice of his intimate counsellor, the cruel Cardinal Balue, Louis next turned his attention to Charles de Melun, with whom he at last felt himself strong enough to cope. Louis relieved Charles de Melun accordingly of all his offices, and then handed him over to his trusty Provost-Marshal, Tristan Lermite, who soon cut off his head as a punishment for his treason at Paris.

The King's officers now began to make various encroachments and abuses of power in the neighbourhood of Burgundy, and to endeavour to instigate the newly ceded Somme cities to revolt against Philippe le Bon, and in July 1466 Louis at length assembled the Commission of Thirty-six under Dunois. Whatever the pretext for this assembly, its real intention on the King's part was to declare the difficulties of the execution of the Treaty of Conflans, and to show that the Comte de Charolais was, and always had been, in the wrong. The result was that a new rupture between France and Burgundy became imminent, especially as

the people of Liège still continued to play the game to which they had been put up by the King. They had, however, already had to pay highly for listening to Louis XI., who had abandoned them, while the power over them of their young Bishop, Louis de Bourbon, had in December 1465 been reimposed, under the protection of the Comte de Charolais.

CHAPTER XXIII

Affairs at Liége and Dinant

1431—1465

THE great city of Liége, on the river Meuse, lay on the side farther from France of what is now the country of Belgium, and Dinant, which was governed by the same Prince-Bishop, was situated a considerable distance up the same river. Between the two cities, to the east of the large town of Namur, was placed the town of Huy, which was controlled by Burgundy, and to which place, or Maestricht, to the north of Liége, the young Prince-Bishop, Louis de Bourbon, occasionally retired, to the annoyance of his subjects the Liégeois.

Whereas Liége, with the surrounding country, was a coal and iron producing district, Dinant had for centuries been famous for its production of a superior class of copper cooking utensils, which, under the name of "dinanterie," were very much appreciated in France.

While Dinant formed part of the same Principality as Liége, and the two towns lived in the greatest unity of sentiment, on the opposite side of the river to Dinant was the town of Bouvignes, which belonged to the Duke of Burgundy. As, under the protection of the city of Namur, Bouvignes had also gone into business in the copper pot trade, while endeavouring

to undersell the older-established Dinant, there was the greatest hatred between the neighbouring towns. Nevertheless, love is love, and proximity is dangerous. Therefore the young fellows and girls of Dinant and Bouvignes, bathing or boating on the Meuse, could not be prevented from casting sheep's-eyes at one another. To burning glances and occasionally interchanged words, in spite of the prohibition of the elders, sometimes liaisons and sometimes marriages ensued. Far, however, from serving to cement any union between Dinant and Bouvignes, these frequent intermixings of the young of both sexes only led to additional trouble and increased bitterness of hatred between the two towns, and caused endless rancorous quarrels and lawsuits.

Thus in every possible way Bouvignes, in the Duchy of Brabant, sought to irritate Dinant, while Dinant, in the Principality of Liège, lost no opportunity of indulging in insult to Bouvignes. No device was neglected by which petty annoyance could be inflicted by one or the other. In pursuance of this long-established policy of hatred, Bouvignes, nearly a hundred and fifty years before the War du Bien Public in France, had aggravated its neighbour by erecting upon its own shore of the Meuse a strong tower, to which the name was given of Crève-Cœur or Heart-Breaker. Not to be outdone in folly, opposite to the Tour de Crève-Cœur Dinant built a citadel in turn, which was called Mont-Orgueil or Mount-Pride. This deep-rooted hatred found its expression when, in 1465, the Comte de Charolais commenced his march into France. Then the people of Bouvignes fired some cannon-shots across the river at Dinant, and planted

huge stakes in the water, so as to prevent the Dinantais from having any access to their shore.

Dinant committed no corresponding offence until Louis XI., having formed his alliance with Liège, had also sent falsely to inform his allies of Liège and Dinant of the "great and glorious victory" which he had gained over Charolais at Monthéry.

In their exuberance of feeling, the people of Dinant now let themselves go, for now that France was gaining the upper hand over Burgundy was certainly the time when Bouvignes could be insulted with impunity. Having dressed up a figure to represent the Comte de Charolais, and painted his arms on its breast, the people of Dinant crossed the river, and elevated a Saint Andrew's Cross, the emblem of Burgundy. From the centre of this cross was suspended the figure of Charolais, to whose neck was attached a cow-bell. The town-singer and fiddler of Dinant, a man named Conart, who possessed very powerful lungs, then, after tolling the cow-bell to attract attention, sang out "Thieves of Bouvignes! Do you not hear your M. de Charolais calling you? Then why do you not come to him? Behold the false traitor! The King has caused him to be hanged, as you see! He called himself the son of a Duke, and was nothing but the son of a priest—the bastard of our Bishop! And yet he thought himself big enough to overthrow the great King of France!"

And thus, while the people on the walls of Bouvignes howled back execrations, and fired at them, but without doing any damage, the Dinantais went on for a time enjoying themselves hugely—for was it not indeed a glorious jest? At length they recrossed the river,

while leaving the Comte de Charolais still hanging from his Saint Andrew's Cross.

To get even with them, that same evening the people of Bouvignes fired a figure of King Louis out of a bombarde, or mortar, as a missile into Dinant. This figure was clad in armour, covered in a mantle bearing the King's Arms, and wore a rope or chain round its neck. The Dinantais thought it but a poor imitation of their own jest, the point of which they proudly assured themselves would surely be felt throughout the length and breadth of the Burgundian dominions.

Poor wretches ! a time was to come when gladly would they have given all that they possessed that such a jest had never been perpetrated.

For the present, however, there was nothing to fear, for was not the Comte de Charolais wounded and defeated, and, should matters subsequently go wrong, was there not the great city of Liége ready to help them with its warlike thousands ? For Liége had hitherto always protected her sister-towns, and treated them as her equals.

The original Government of Liége was ecclesiastic, a dozen Canons having built up around the church of Saint-Lambert, which was situated near a shrine dedicated to Saint-Hubert, to which many pilgrims had resorted from early times. To the pilgrims the Canons of Saint-Lambert gave protection, and, a town growing up around them, the Chapter elected themselves a Bishop, and established themselves under him as the judges of the marches of the Ardennes.

Soon for a hundred miles around Liége there was not a Knight or Baron but trembled before the judicial

power of its episcopal ring, and feared nothing so much as to be cited to appear before its wearer.

As the coal and iron mines in and around the place were opened up, two great industries commenced to flourish in Liège, a city which, while calling itself free, was yet the home of constant stormy agitations.

Increasing in numbers by the influx from without, the population of workmen, instigated by the Chapter, from an early period endeavoured, and successfully, to kill off or subdue the nobles living in the surrounding country. No Magistrates were admitted to office save from the trades—to occupy the distinguished post of Consul it was necessary to be a coal-merchant or an iron-smith. This being the case, those of the trades began before long to establish a nobility of their own, and thus wine-merchants, tailors, and men of the coal or iron-yards, all became nobles of Liège. Nor were these long left without coats of arms, after the establishment in the neighbourhood of a famous saddler who was a clever craftsman, and possessed of an inventive genius. This saddler served out coats of arms to all who would pay him, nor did the members of the same family think it by any means incumbent upon them to carry the same blazon on their shields. Each selected the heraldic design that he liked, and the saddler painted it for him.

By degrees the priestly power in Liège and its sister towns became weakened at the same time that, in the space of about three quarters of a century, most of the principal families in Liège, from constant quarrelling, had been killed off. The rule in the city became therefore, towards the end of the fourteenth

century, one of universal suffrage—the apprentice possessing a vote like his master.

While the men of the city and its neighbourhood were essentially turbulent, the women were no better. These were, from carrying coal-baskets and rowing barges, possessed of iron muscles, and in every disturbance more violent than the men whom they instigated to outrage.

Shut up as they were in one big city, the inhabitants of Liège became jealous of the great surrounding classes outside, while feeling themselves to be hated by all that did not belong to them. Frequently this jealousy and suspicion broke out likewise within the walls, when, as a means of punishment against any person or body of persons who might be the object of distrust, he or they were boycotted and compelled to leave the city, where no one would work for them or supply them with food.

Having destroyed the castles of the surrounding nobles, the Liégeois also abolished in their wars the principle of employing the man-at-arms, the mounted cavalier encased in steel. In case of war every able-bodied man became a lightly armed foot-soldier, ready, with agility and courage, to pit himself against any steel-clad warrior on horse-back.

Matters having arrived at this stage, as the supreme power of the Pope became more recognised, the appointment of the Bishopric of Liège fell into the hands of the Roman Pontiff. While the original Chapter of Saint-Lambert still existed and flourished in a portion of the town around its Cathedral, it could no more appoint its own priestly and civil ruler to Liège.

The appointments to the Bishopric of Liége now fell into the hands of some powerful friend of the Pope—a Duc de Brabant or a Duc de Bourgogne.

Philippe le Bon was in the possession of both the Duchy of Burgundy and that of Brabant, which latter he had stolen from his cousin of Nevers, and he had contrived to name the last two Bishops to this proud city and the surrounding country, which had been from of old independent of any outside rule. The Bishops, who held in their hands all the civil control of the justice of Liége, were sometimes merely profligate young nobles who had not even been ordained. When one of these was discontented with his subjects, being the absolute ruler, it was in his power to punish them doubly. While closing all the churches and forbidding any religious services to be held, he could retire to some neighbouring city, and, by carrying off the wand of justice with him, shut up the law-courts of every description, leaving anarchy behind him.

Politically, Liége was cut off from all her neighbours, all of them the subjects of that great Prince, the Burgundian Duke. Since he encouraged these to trade with each other, rather than with the city which did not own his sway, the Provinces of Limbourg, Brabant, and Namur were all looked upon by Liége and Dinant as enemies, especially as they commenced to be the successful competitors of those cities in the traffic of coal, iron, cloth, and copper goods.

Needless to say that the inhabitants of Liége and her sister towns felt that they had ample cause to hate the ruler of Burgundy, even without

the stimulus to hatred supplied by the machinations of Louis XI.

For about thirty years previous to the period at which we have now arrived, Philippe le Bon had maintained, as Bishop of Liège, a do-nothing parasite of his own named Jean de Heinsberg. During the long tenure of his position as ruler, Jean de Heinsberg had done nothing to strengthen the city. When in the year 1431 there had been a quarrel between Liège and the Duc, and Liège had risen in arms, the Bishop referred to the Archbishop of Cologne as arbitrator, and agreed to his sentence that the city should pay Philippe the immense fine of two hundred thousand Rhenish florins.

While Liège had, with her Bishop's connivance, to pay off this huge sum by yearly instalments, her trade with the Low Countries was gradually diminishing, while, owing to the wars in France, she was no longer able to send any quantity of her merchandise up the Meuse to that country. Poverty set in, and with it quarrels within the walls, where all were embittered, the poorer classes attacking those who were better off, in order to make them disgorge, merely to pay the enemy, Philippe le Bon.

One friend Liège then had, in the shape of La Marck, Duc de Bouillon and ruler of Sedan, commonly called the Wild Boar of the Ardennes, who was aiding Charles VII. of France by occupying the cities of Luxembourg against Burgundy, and holding the country of the Upper Meuse by which Liège could have free access to France.

Foolishly the Liégeois quarrelled with La Marck, to their own disadvantage; but at length Jean de

Heinsberg, who was Suzerain of La Marck for some of his principal fiefs and castles, went against the Duc de Bourgogne, and restored to the Wild Boar the Government of Bouillon and Sedan. La Marck accordingly appeared before the Chapter of Liège to give his oath of fidelity to the Bishop a few years before the date of invasion of France by Charolais. Taking an early opportunity after his desertion from Burgundy to induce the Bishop of Liège to visit him, Philippe le Bon terrified Jean de Heinsberg—it is said by threats of putting him to death—into surrendering his Bishopric in favour of the Duc's very young nephew, Louis de Bourbon.

Alfonso Borgia, who was then Pope, and ruling under the name of Calixtus III., confirmed this appointment with a Bull, and Louis de Bourbon marched into Liège with a brilliant escort of nobles and men-at-arms of Burgundy and Brabant.

While these followers of Bourbon robbed the treasuries of Liège of large sums, as they said as loans for the Prince, this young spark, leaving the headquarters of his Bishopric, usually made his residence in Huy, Maestricht, or Louvain, on Burgundian territory.

The city commenced to resist, and refused to send money to its Bishop, whereupon Bourbon calmly took possession of the bâton of justice and closed all the tribunals. A reign of discord and violence now set in in Liège, one in which mock tribunals were established, consisting of rowdy young men, who held their courts at the street-corners and made those pay up heavily whom they arrested and tried in a forcible manner.

A more serious trial was that when some of the bourgeois seized upon some of the Bishop's own *procureurs* or agents. Louis de Bourbon then hurried to Liège, and, strange as it may seem, entered into a bargain with those who held his creatures in their power. By this compact he arranged with the Magistrates that they should pay over into his hands two-thirds of the money which they contrived to extract from his agents.

This all took place shortly before the death, in 1461, of Charles VII., who was on friendly terms with the Liégeois. Philippe le Bon was then still entertaining Louis, the rebel Dauphin, at his Court, and, knowing that Charles could not live long, the Duc determined to wait until Louis should succeed to the throne of France.

Then he had calculated to rule Louis and France together, and to do as he liked with Liège. How he had been disappointed in Louis upon his accession we know, while with reference to Liège, as it happened, Louis had his own policy.

Louis sent a force down the Meuse, and by threats of making an attack, contrived to persuade a number of the leading men of Liège to come to visit him in Paris. After having these led past the Royal gallows to frighten them, he reproached them for having promised his father that they would lead him back to him from the Court of Burgundy, a prisoner. Then he forgave them, made several of their number Knights, and took Liège formally under the protection of France.

Louis, however, did Liège no other service than that of purchasing the good offices of the Croys, who

would otherwise, from their posts as Governors of Hainaut and Luxembourg, have caused the Liégeois much annoyance on behalf of their master the Duc de Bourgogne.

Louis de Bourbon now again caused an intolerable condition of affairs in Liége by leaving the city, while carrying off with him the keys of the churches and closing the High Ecclesiastical and other Courts. The result was that the city was in a state of revolution, while many of the merchants who could afford to leave and seek a home elsewhere did so. The workmen and poor without number were left without work and were soon on the borders of starvation. Liége was full of priests, many of whom lived in the great cloister of Saint-Lambert, which formed a little town of itself. When the people implored these priests to perform the religious services, they refused to do so in the face of the interdict of their Bishop. On the other hand, the Chapter, considering themselves to be the original Sovereigns and proprietors of the city, absolutely refused to obey Louis de Bourbon when he summoned them to leave the walls of Liége.

Towards the people, the attitude of the Canons was to say, "Let us all wait and have patience. The old Duc Philippe will die, then we shall get our own way once more; for the present let us avoid violence."

Impatient of waiting, the inhabitants became furious, and a certain Knight named Raes de Heers, a man of action but absolutely unscrupulous, placed himself at the head of all to whom moderation no longer appealed. Although he was of noble birth and of old descent, this Knight, who wore the golden spurs of chivalry on his heels, was yet inscribed among the rolls of the iron-

workers of the city, who formed the most powerful class. He even quartered the fleurs-de-lis of France on his arms ; but, since he was an iron-worker like themselves, the turbulent population were very willing to accept him as their leader.

The first action of Knight Raes was to get the Archbishop of Cologne to raise the religious interdict imposed by the Bishop. This action proved unavailing to procure relief for long for the people deprived of their religion, as Philippe le Bon contrived to get the Pope to send a Papal Legate to reimpose the edict in all its force. While Raes now found some wandering friars and riff-raff priests without any benefices daring enough to celebrate the Mass at the street-corners, the disgusted Canons remained with their doors closed, while their church-bells remained silent.

Outrage now commenced, a traitor named Bérart, a friend of the Bishop, who had spoken against Liège to the King of France, becoming the first object of the popular vengeance. Bérart's house was levelled with the ground, while the Sheriffs of Liège, thinking that a short sentence could have no effect upon such an offender, declared this friend of Louis de Bourbon banished *for the period of one hundred years !*

Soon after this a certain Gilles de Huy was beheaded without any proper trial, his sole crime being that, although himself a revolutionary, he would not go as far as the others.

Further acts of violence having taken place, the Knight Raes began to feel himself strong. With the representatives of thirty trades behind him, he compelled the Sheriffs to reopen the law-courts. He also

imitated the recent action of Louis in seizing upon Bishoprics in France, and declared that all the goods of the Bishop of Liège were sequestrated and himself deposed.

The Liégeois in their actions were relying upon the protection of Louis XI. against Philippe le Bon, the powerful Croys being on the side of Louis and against the Comte de Charolais. That which neither the King of France nor the Liégeois had reckoned upon, however, happened. This was that, while driving out the Croys, and while his father still lived, Charles de Charolais seized upon the Government of Burgundy. Using his father as a figure-head, one to whom his old retainers and friends would, as he knew, not prove unfaithful, Charolais obtained all the actual power. When the Croys fell and Charolais invaded France, to join the Princes in war on the King, Raes declared that, there being no Bishop, a Regent was required. Jean de la Marck thought that he ought to be made Regent, with appointments. Raes and his backers thought otherwise, with the result that the Wild Boar went over to the party of the Duc de Bourgogne.

The active Raes, after first trying the Count Palatine in vain, soon secured his Regent in the person of another German Prince, Mark of Baden, brother of the Margrave of Baden, of the Prince-Archbishop of Trèves, and of the great Bishop of Metz, accepting the office. "Here," said he, "is one strong enough for us." Raes, however, omitted to inform the Liégeois that, while the two great prelates entirely disapproved of their brother's action in accepting the Regency of Liège, he had, without any authority from Louis to do so, talked to the Margrave of Baden and his brother

in the name of the King of France, whose support he promised to Baden. As a matter of fact, Louis wished to make Jean de Nevers the Regent, and that Prince would no doubt have been the better man, as Jean de la Marck was on friendly terms with him and they would have worked hand in hand against the Comte de Charolais. Nevers also had many friends in Brabant, of which he was the rightful Duc.

The Prince of Baden duly entered the city and assumed the Regency, although it was with great difficulty that any of the Canons could be obtained to perform the necessary religious service upon his state entry to take over his Government.

Raes and his followers now determined to force the clergy to perform the religious services, in spite of the Papal Bull which had been published to forbid them. The old Dean of the Chapter was dragged by force to the Hôtel de Ville, and openly questioned by Raes on the balcony in the presence of the multitude listening below.

"Now," asked Raes, "with reference to this Bull, which talks about the excesses committed by the city, but says no word of the excesses of the Bishop, who made it? Was it the Pope in person?"

The Dean replied: "No, not the Pope in person, but he who has charge of those matters."

"Listen, people!" shouted Raes. "Do you hear? It was not the Pope! The Bull is a forgery; the interdict is of no effect!"

Furiously the people rushed off, while shouting, "The Bull is false!" They rushed to the houses of the Canons, and, finding that some of them had fled from the city, pillaged and destroyed them. Armed

guards were meanwhile placed at the doors of the monasteries to listen all night and hear if the monks sung their matins in the morning. Woe betide them should they not do so! The Canons were compelled to sing also, after doing which some of them fled from the city. All the goods of those who fled were sold, and half the proceeds given to the Regent—Raes and his band kept the rest.

The King of France was now commencing his campaign against the Duc de Bourbon—he sent therefore to recognise Prince Mark of Baden as Regent of Liège, while, as we have already mentioned, promising two hundred lances to the city. Unfortunately, the people of the State of Baden, whom Louis endeavoured to persuade to take the opportunity of the absence of Charolais to invade Brabant, were not in a hurry to sign a treaty of alliance with the King. They declined to move without being paid in advance, even to further the interests of their Prince in Liège. When at last, in the middle of June 1465, a treaty was signed by the Margrave of Baden, instead of doing anything, he went off to search for troops and artillery in Germany.

CHAPTER XXIV
“The Piteous Peace”
1465

WHEN Louis XI. sent to Liège the false news of the great victory he had won over Charolais, he sent by the hands of his two agents who took the news plenty of money to be distributed in the city. These agents had received instructions not to leave the city until they had contrived to embroil its inhabitants with Burgundy. This object was successfully accomplished, the Liégeois soon sallying forth to burn and pillage the houses of their detested neighbours in Limbourg and Brabant.

In their excitement and jubilation, the men of Liège, themselves deprived of the rites of religion, did not hesitate at sacrilege, but pillaged the altars of their neighbours' churches as freely as their houses. Learning that, instead of the King having gained a victory, Paris was besieged, and hearing, further, that Charolais was negotiating with the three powerful brothers of the Regent Mark of Baden, the Germans in the city began to think themselves associated with a losing cause. Accordingly, giving out that their scruples were aroused by the sacrilege of the Liégeois, the Regent, with all his German chivalry, marched off from the city, which they left to its own devices.

Foolishly continuing to besiege Limbourg after the departure of their Regent with his troops, Raes and his followers suffered a severe defeat in October 1465 at the hands of the aged Duc Philippe le Bon, who, contriving to get some Knights and men-at-arms together, vowed that he was not too old or infirm to chastise in person the insolent wretches who had ventured to declare war upon him. His victory was complete, his mounted men killing about half of the footmen of Liége, and driving the remainder back in confusion.

Immediately after this event, news arrived from Paris that Charolais and the Princes were gaining the upper hand in a treaty of peace which the King was signing. Full of alarm, the people of Liége now cried loudly for peace, and sent messengers to the Duc Philippe at Brussels to demand a truce, which was accorded them.

Terrified as were the people of Liége, those of Dinant were more frightened still. While those fled who had no stake in the place, such as the workmen who owned no property, the merchants and copper-smiths were unable to abandon their foundries, forges, and valuable material which had been established for centuries, nor could they remove such weighty articles with them. Should they fly without their tools and materials for working in copper, nothing but starvation awaited them. Besides, who in the surrounding country would give them refuge?

Such was the depression of the people of Dinant that they even allowed their enemies of Bouvignes to come beneath their walls to insult and attack them, without venturing to reply in any way.

At length (November 13, 1465), hearing the terrible news that the Comte de Charolais, returning from Paris, was embarking his artillery at Mézières to come down the Meuse to attack their town, they sent to implore the help of their neighbours of Liége. There was—alas for Dinant!—little chance of mercy for them from Burgundy. Should such an improbable thing occur as that the Duc and his son Charolais should forgive the foolish incident of the hanging of the Comte's figure, even if it had been done merely to annoy the people of Bouvignes, forgive again the saying that he was "not the Duc's son, but a priest's bastard," there was one who would never forgive.

The old Duchesse Isabelle, granddaughter of John of Gaunt, of the proud house of Lancaster, and daughter of King Juan I. of Portugal, was not going to swallow this insult to her honour. The aged Princess possibly felt that the insult touched her all the more closely from the fact that her father, the King of Portugal, had been indeed a bastard. At all events, Isabelle vowed that, no matter what it might cost, she would ruin this town by putting all its inhabitants to the sword.

The town of Huy sent, in a friendly way, messages to Dinant to advise its inhabitants to themselves punish all of those who had had any connection with the memorable insult to Bouvignes, the glorious jest which had afforded so much merriment. Acting on this advice, they sent to a neighbouring town to which that accursed fiddler Conart, who had sung out the insults, had fled. All the blame was now thrown upon him, and his arrest was demanded—they would kill him for his folly, vainly hoping that the death of one

or two men would appease Burgundy, which was determined to wipe out the insult with all the blood that there was in Dinant.

In their burning thirst for revenge on Dinant, both Philippe le Bon and his wife wrote to tell Charolais to hurry up his return unless he wished to incur their disfavour. He was accordingly making haste, and his large army increased as he came; many of those from the cities of the Somme and archers from Flanders joining him on the way.

As the Comte advanced, however, he decided that the better plan would be to deal first with the great city of Liége, as, after that had been reduced to submission, it would be easy enough to dispose of the smaller Dinant. To this place even as the ground was trembling under the feet of Charolais's army, Liége sent to promise her help, but only a very few men came with the message. The trembling Dinant was in abject despair, and at the same time applying to Louis XI. for immediate assistance and writing humble apologies to the Bishop of Liége and the Comte de Charolais. In vain was it to remind Louis XI. that Liége and Dinant had merely commenced the war with Burgundy in accordance with the promises of his messengers; in vain also for Dinant to beg the Abbot of Saint-Hubert to plead for her with Charolais, "as for a dying man to God," for no replies came to any of her letters.

Instead of coming to Dinant, Charolais went and sat down with his enormous army on the Meuse not far from Liége, while feeding his troops on the inhabitants of the surrounding country. He had 28,000 horsemen, many cannons, and numberless infantry.

Among his glittering ranks were to be seen the blazons of innumerable Knights, the flags of many States. He was in no hurry to engage in active hostilities with Liège, his main object being to terrify the city into making submission and paying him an enormous subsidy in order to be left alone.

While Liège failed to send the promised aid to Dinant, many of her inhabitants were now for peace at any price, so that they might save their lives. Why, said they, should they risk all by obstinately insisting upon giving succour to Dinant? Selfishly therefore, a body of nobles went out from Liège to see what terms they could make for themselves. With the blindest politeness the terrible Comte de Charolais received the deputies, and commenced by showing them his splendid army drawn up in battle-array. Observing their terror, the Comte remarked amiably: "I just wanted to show you people of Liège that you were wrong when you said that I had had all of my men killed in France. These are those that still remain to me." It was now the middle of December, and Charolais well knew in his heart that very soon, in order to obtain provisions, his forces would be compelled to separate in all directions—that, in fact, an active siege of Liège would be impossible at that season. The alarmed deputies, however, only saw what lay before their eyes, and were ready to submit to any terms whatever. They agreed to the treaty the Comte proposed. Miserable and dishonourable indeed were the terms agreed to by what was known as "The Piteous Peace of Liège"; they were as follows:

Liège was to humbly make the *amende honorable*



ANNE, DAME DE BEAUJEU
Elder Daughter of Louis XI.

at Brussels, and to build a chapel as a sign of contrition.

The Duc de Bourgogne and his heirs, in their capacity as Ducs de Brabant, were to have for ever the sword of justice of Liège reposed in their hands, while no longer was Liège to have any kind of Court, ecclesiastical or civil, having authority over the surrounding territories. The city was to pay to Duc Philippe le Bon the sum of 390,000 florins, and to the Comte de Charolais a further 190,000 florins. The indemnity to be paid to Louis de Bourbon, the Bishop, was, however, to be arranged for later—it would be large. The city was to deliver up to the Comte all letters and treaties received from the King of France and formally to renounce his alliance. Liège was humbly to return to its allegiance to its Bishop and to the Pope, was further no longer to fortify any of the towns or villages in the district of Le Liégeois. The Duc was to pass the Meuse freely at any point, when and where he should choose to do so.

In consideration of all this, the Duc agreed to grant a peace to all the territories and towns of Le Liégeois, *with the sole exception of Dinant*.

When the notables returned to the city with this treaty (December 22, 1465), the people declared furiously that they were betrayed, and condemned to death Gilles de Mès, the very rich bourgeois, who announced it to them. Many pleaded for him, and, when he offered all his possessions to the people, even his judges wished to let Gilles de Mès go free and retire to a monastery. The Knight Raes and a burgomaster named Bare laughed at this appeal,

while saying, "Hurry up! make an end of him! we cannot sell the freedom of the city." The head of Gilles was cut off, in a very bungling manner, by an executioner, who was too sympathetic with his victim to behead him properly, and after this bloody execution the peace was proclaimed to the sound of the trumpet, without any more disturbance for the time being.

The Comte de Charolais could not, however, raise his big camp at Saint-Trond, but was compelled to remain glued to the ground at this place if he would see any of the provisions of "The Piteous Peace" complied with.

This was the opportunity taken by Louis XI. to invade Normandy, and thus undo the work done by Charolais in the making of the Treaty of Conflans.

While receiving daily piteous appeals from Charles de France to return and help him, Charolais, unable to budge lest his army should fall to pieces, heard also how the Duc de Bretagne had been suborned by Louis XI., with a gift of a hundred and twenty thousand golden crowns, not to interfere in favour of the young Duc de Normandie. Charles the Bold foamed and raged and wrote letters to the King to protest, but the bad news continued to arrive from Normandy. First the King and the richly paid Duc de Bourbon had taken Evreux, then it was Vernon, next Louviers, lastly Rouen, where the King was indulging his vengeance with drownings and decapitations wholesale.

For a whole month, while cursing and swearing and indulging in the terrible fits of rage to which he was prone, Charolais with his army waited in cold

wintry weather before the people of Liège sent him out the treaty of peace duly signed, sealed, and confirmed. A hundred fully armed men came in melancholy procession with the document; but of what avail were their arms, and against whom could they be employed? The city was, for the time being, as ruined and miserable as though the Comte had entered with an army; there was no trade, while numbers of the starving people had deserted it and were wandering about in the fields and forests like hungry wolves. It was well, perhaps, to go armed, if only for fear of those starving wretches, who could live by nothing but brigandage. They might well have fallen upon the bearers of "The Piteous Treaty" and torn them to pieces in their impotent rage.

In Liège, meanwhile, the courage of the people was reasserting itself upon one point, the inhabitants of the city now declaring that Dinant must be granted exemption also, or that they would surely rise in her defence. The Comte de Charolais said nothing about Dinant, but went off with his treaty to join his father in Brussels. As for his army, he was obliged to disband it without even paying the troops, telling them to go away whither they chose for the rest of the winter. Doubtless the Comte sent off this enormous body of men with promises of payment at some future time, but we can imagine the condition to which they would be likely to reduce the inhabitants of even the Duc's own territories as they marched away in armed bands in one direction or another. At Brussels, the Comte received a specious letter from Louis XI. In this the King

while saying, "Hurry up! make an end of him! we cannot sell the freedom of the city." The head of Gilles was cut off, in a very bungling manner, by an executioner, who was too sympathetic with his victim to behead him properly, and after this bloody execution the peace was proclaimed to the sound of the trumpet, without any more disturbance for the time being.

The Comte de Charolais could not, however, raise his big camp at Saint-Trond, but was compelled to remain glued to the ground at this place if he would see any of the provisions of "The Piteous Peace" complied with.

This was the opportunity taken by Louis XI. to invade Normandy, and thus undo the work done by Charolais in the making of the Treaty of Conflans.

While receiving daily piteous appeals from Charles de France to return and help him, Charolais, unable to budge lest his army should fall to pieces, heard also how the Duc de Bretagne had been suborned by Louis XI., with a gift of a hundred and twenty thousand golden crowns, not to interfere in favour of the young Duc de Normandie. Charles the Bold foamed and raged and wrote letters to the King to protest, but the bad news continued to arrive from Normandy. First the King and the richly paid Duc de Bourbon had taken Evreux, then it was Vernon, next Louviers, lastly Rouen, where the King was indulging his vengeance with drownings and decapitations wholesale.

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wintry weather before the people of Liège sent him out the treaty of peace duly signed, sealed, and confirmed. A hundred fully armed men came in melancholy procession with the document; but of what avail were their arms, and against whom could they be employed? The city was, for the time being, as ruined and miserable as though the Comte had entered with an army; there was no trade, while numbers of the starving people had deserted it and were wandering about in the fields and forests like hungry wolves. It was well, perhaps, to go armed, if only for fear of those starving wretches, who could live by nothing but brigandage. They might well have fallen upon the bearers of "The Piteous Treaty" and torn them to pieces in their impotent rage.

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explained that really he had only deprived his brother of Normandy in order to relieve him of difficulties which were too great for him to be able to cope with, and further that, according to an ancient edict of the time of Charlemagne (six hundred and sixty years ago), he found that it was out of the power of the King of France to divest himself of the Duchy in favour of any one. Louis ended his letter by saying that it was with the greatest affliction that he had found himself unable to content his brother.

However great his affliction at the sad necessity of relieving his brother Charles of his appanage, in order to retake Normandy, Louis had sacrificed a friendly race of kindred blood, had left unsupported that which a French writer has called "Our poor little Walloon France of Dinant and Liège." While protecting himself in a measure by the recovery of Normandy from the combination of Brittany, England, and Burgundy, the King could not, however, prevent another combination between these two latter Powers, one, namely, of a marriage between Charolais and the Princess Margaret of York, sister of Edward IV. The Duchesse Isabelle, although herself of Lancastrian descent, was at this time sinking her hatred of the House of York the better to indulge her hatred of France, and endeavouring to arrange with the English King to bring about this union so distasteful to Louis XI. The better to strengthen himself against Burgundy, the King now did all in his power to cement his union with the family of Bourbon, even seeking, if possible, to wean away from the Duc Philippe his nephew Louis de Bourbon, Bishop of Liège, the brother of Duc Jean II.

In pursuance of these schemes, he contrived to obtain the Cardinal's hat for Charles de Bourbon, Archbishop of Lyon, a brother of Duc Jean and Bishop Louis, while he gave in marriage to Louis, Bastard of Bourbon, his own illegitimate daughter Jeanne, daughter of Marguerite de Sassenage.

The King's eldest legitimate daughter, Anne, who was later to develop such a forceful character and to rule her brother, Charles VIII., was as yet but two years old. He had already offered her to Charolais and talked about marrying her to a young son of his cousin, Jean de Calabre; but Louis now affianced her to the youngest of the Bourbon brothers, Pierre de Beaujeu. This Pierre was to become a very faithful servant of the King, and one who proved all the more subservient as he was ruled in all things by his capable wife.

Of the House of Anjou Louis now singled out Jean de Calabre for his favours. The Catalans demanded the Duc de Calabre for their King, and as King of Aragon. To aid him in advancing his claims to the various Monarchies which he had in view, Louis XI. now gave Jean d'Anjou two sums amounting to a hundred and twenty thousand livres. In return, the King demanded from Duc Jean de Calabre the service of proceeding to the Court of Brittany, to demand the person of his brother Charles de France from François II.

We have mentioned how to Dunois had been restored all of his estates. The better now to bind this leading member of the House of Orléans to his interests, Louis arranged a marriage between the son of the celebrated Bastard and one of the Queen's

nieces, one of the numerous Princesses of Savoy. Thus, one by one, the astute Louis was acquiring as his friends all of those upon whom the Court of Burgundy had most relied. There was, however, yet one of whom he could not feel sure: this was the middle-aged but still brilliant Louis de Luxembourg, Comte de Saint-Pol, who had been the friend of Charolais from childhood. It is true that the King had accorded to Saint-Pol the office which he had so much coveted of Constable of France; but that appointment, felt Louis, the Comte would rightly consider that he owed to the good offices of Charolais, and something more was required would the King shake his old friendship with Burgundy.

Luck came in the King's way. A widower with a young son and daughter, Louis de Luxembourg fell in love with a young lady of the Blood-Royal, Marguerite de Bourbon, the niece of Duc Philippe. She would be a brilliant match, and the Comte asked the good offices of Charolais to back him up in obtaining the hand of his cousin; but, for some reason or other, these good offices were not given. While Saint-Pol was mortified in his pride and sick with disappointed love, Louis XI. heard of the matter, and, seeing his opportunity, sent for Louis de Luxembourg. "You want a wife, I hear, and Charolais will not help you! You should have come to me. I will give you a wife—two wives!—one for yourself and one for your son, both charming young ladies I can assure you—my own nieces, in fact, and Princesses of Savoy. Now, how will that suit you?"

Almost before Saint-Pol had done thanking the King, Louis added, "Oh, by the way, I forgot to say

that I have also got a husband for your daughter—he is a Prince of Savoy, my nephew, and the brother of your affianced bride. I hope you will have nothing to say against the family; they are descended from the Kings of Cyprus, and their blood is just as blue as that of Bourbon, which your *soi-disant* friend Charolais thought too good for you."

Nor were Louis' benefits to his old enemy, Louis de Luxembourg, even yet exhausted. He gave him the town of Guise in Picardy, at the very gates of Burgundy; he gave him the Captaincy of Rouen, and then the Governorship of Normandy. Finally, the King promised to obtain for the Constable the succession to the estates of his uncle, the Comte d'Eu, a Prince of the Blood.

Hearing of all these proceedings, the Comte de Charolais was eating his heart out with rage, especially as, having imposed the *gabelle*, or salt tax, upon the cities of the Somme, they seemed anxious to break away from Burgundy back to France once more. But he had to procure money somehow, to keep the troops employed against Liége.

Liége, meanwhile, was not paying up, and giving the fiery Comte more cause for fury. He was also very angry because that city had sent to the Duc, his father, at Brussels, and ventured to ask Philippe le Bon to establish "a good peace between his son the Seigneur Charles and the people of Dinant."

CHAPTER XXV

The Duc's Vengeance at Dinant

1466

THE Comte de Charolais had not forgotten by any means the revenge which he proposed to take on Dinant, but the spring of 1466 ripened into summer, and still he found himself unable to move. The army of which he disposed when his various allies had left him consisted of the feudal retainers of Burgundy in her various States and Provinces, and these vassals and under-vassals only owed forty days of feudal service in a year. In spite of this, during the year 1465 they had been kept in arms for about ten months and then sent away without being paid.

These retainers for a time refused to come out when again called upon, notwithstanding that the old Duc was furious at their recalcitrancy. They knew, however, that money was so short at the Ducal Court that the Duc himself was unable to have his table supplied in the manner to which he was accustomed. Philippe, however, fretted and stormed by turns, while his courtiers told him that both captains and men-at-arms were in rags, and ashamed to put in an appearance in that condition.

At length, one day, Philippe le Bon flew into a

violent rage, exclaiming, "And yet I have already drawn upon my treasury to the extent of two hundred thousand golden crowns. Must I, then, pay my men-at-arms out of my own pocket? Am I perhaps already laid on the shelf and forgotten? Rising, in his passion the Duc threw over the table and everything on it, after which he fell to the ground in a fit of apoplexy.

By degrees Philippe recovered from his attack, which had been expected to prove fatal. No sooner was he restored to health than he caused threatening summonses to be sent out in all directions, when, for fear of the violence of the Comte de Charolais, who had been known to kill a soldier simply for appearing slovenly on parade, the captains and men began to assemble in great numbers.

For months past an enormous number of outlaws, some from France, some from Liège and other towns, had been wandering about the woods and joining those homeless men who already lived without any shelter to their heads. These vagabonds were mostly desperate characters, who called themselves "Les Enfants de la Verte Tente" (Children of the Green Tent), and one of the causes of the rage of the Duc de Bourgogne had been that these marauders had been pillaging and burning his towns and villages, while scoffing openly at the Duc and his son, who appeared powerless to punish them. Some of the French members of these bands had been probably sent by Louis XI. in order to keep the country disturbed.

Latterly, for some unknown cause, all of these armed wanderers of the Green Tent had been thronging into Dinant, where they were neither invited nor wanted. They were, however, too strong for the

hammerers of copper who formed the bulk of the decent bourgeois of Dinant, and, remaining in the town, they did a good deal towards inspiring these decent workmen with courage and an attitude of continued defiance towards Burgundy.

Dinant was a strongly fortified town, having stout walls crowned with no less than eighty towers. It was also provisioned with food sufficient to withstand a three years' siege. The men of the Green Tent now reminded the bourgeois of Dinant of the fact that Dinant, although often attacked, had never yet been taken by an enemy, and they scoffed at the assembling might of Burgundy. None the less, as the army of the Comte de Charolais was before long heard to have reached the number of thirty thousand, many of the desperadoes quietly slipped out of the town and back to the woods, leaving the inhabitants of Dinant to look out for themselves.

Thus it seemed probable that the innocent and honest tradesmen would be left alone to suffer the fury of Charolais, while those who had continually gone on provoking the Duc and Charolais would escape unpunished.

Among those who thronged to join the army of Burgundy in July 1466 were many of the same race as the unfortunate inhabitants of Dinant, the Walloons of the Province of Hainaut having no scruple in joining the Comte, in the hope of sharing in the expected pillage of the doomed city. Oddly enough, Louis de Luxembourg, in spite of the recent overtures of the King, also came to join the Ducal army at Namur, while bringing in his train considerable numbers of the nobles and armed bands of Picardy. Saint-Pol had

indeed only been married to the King's niece on August 1, but, taking the whole of his family with him, he arrived at Namur on the 15th of the same month, and, with his forces, attached himself to the army of Charolais to fight against Dinant, the ally of Louis XI.

As of all the doubtful characters who figured in France in the time of Louis XI. the Comte de Saint-Pol was perhaps the most shifty and unreliable, we may conclude that he had his own reasons for the action which he now took. These were probably not that he wished to aid the aggrandisement of Burgundy, but, on the contrary, wished to be present to prevent that State from becoming overpoweringly strong. He doubtless wished to see as little of Burgundy as possible in the future on the marches of Picardy, which were his own headquarters.

While the arms of the Comte de Charolais were being sharpened for their destruction, some of the more peaceful inhabitants of Dinant imagined that they might be able to stay their course by themselves arresting some half-dozen or so of those who had been most conspicuous in the original insult to Charolais at Bouvignes. These had fled but were captured, when the mob broke into the prison, released them, and threatened the Magistrates with death. A bold old bourgeois, named Jean Guérin, then saved the situation, and recalled the mob to order, by saying: "Let the fugitives go; it is not they who should be punished, but those who have shown no respect for our laws by releasing them. The city must make an example of these."

Those who had broken down the prison-doors now themselves recaptured the fugitives, when the Magis-

trates could not make up their minds how to deal with them, saying that, were they to hand them over to a foreign power for punishment, they might as well also hand over "their most precious possession," the sword of justice of the city.

Whether or no the dignity of the city would be affected by the delivery of the prisoners to the Duc de Bourgogne was a matter which continued to be gravely discussed within the walls of Dinant. The folly of the Magistrates and Town Councillors in wasting their time in thus talking about their "immemorial rights," seems almost inconceivable, when it is remembered that a formidable foe was advancing against them.

Soon this foe relieved them of all further necessity of thinking for themselves concerning their rights and privileges, by commencing to batter their walls.

Almost at the last moment, the semi-savages who had made of Dinant their fort and resting-place between their various acts of pillage, were guilty of a further insult to Burgundy, one which would be sure to prevent any spark of pity for the inhabitants of the city—any hope of pardon, should it be taken.

There was in the environs of Dinant a large, marshy, muddy place full of toads. In the midst of this was stuck up an effigy of Philippe le Bon, ducally attired and wearing his arms. The terrible men of the Green Tent stood round jeering at this, while crying out, "Behold, the worthy throne of the great fat Toad!" This action was at once reported by the country people to the Duc. This jest may seem too puerile to attract a minute's attention nowadays, but to the Duke of Burgundy it contained a slighting

allusion to his Sovereignty over the marshes on the sea-coasts of the Low Countries. He vowed, in revenge, to destroy even the place whereon Dinant had stood, while ploughing up the ground and sowing it with salt. One hope the inhabitants of Dinant still had of succour, and this was in the city of Liége, from whence they confidently expected the aid of forty thousand men.

There had been repeated assurances from the citizens of Liége that they would come to the assistance of their sister town, but the days passed on until the third week of August 1466, and still they came not. Then it was that a great many of the brigands of the Green Tent lost heart and deserted the city. Better for them, they said, to conform to their regulations, which were never to sleep under a roof!

The great convoy of artillery of the Comte's army arrived at length before Dinant on August 18. It was under the command of an able artillery captain named Von Hagenbach, who at once placed his batteries in position and commenced battering down the houses in the suburbs without the walls. Thereupon the men of Dinant, sallying forth, themselves levelled the remainder of the suburbs with the ground, while under fire, in order to leave a clear space to be able to repel the besiegers. The Comte's herald now summoned them to yield, but to this they made a scornful reply, to the effect that, far from yielding, it would be the invaders who would soon be turned out by the troops of the King of France and the men of Liége.

Far from Louis being able to help his allies, he

was now in considerable difficulties, for not only was France suffering from such poverty that it was with immense trouble that he could obtain payment of the greatly increased taxes, but there was an awful outbreak of plague in Paris. The King wrote, however, to beg Saint-Pol to remember that Dinant was under his protection. The effect of such a letter, when communicated to Charolais, may be imagined, since it was chiefly because of the King's declared protection of Liège and Dinant that he hated both towns, and was determined to annihilate the latter.

He had heard that Liège was coming to the rescue, but he was also well informed by his spies of the absurd and cruel delays that were taking place in Liège, where the Magistrates were calmly telling the impatient people not to be alarmed or to hurry themselves unduly, as everything must be done regularly and in an orderly fashion.

While the Liégeois were being thus held back by the wicked procrastination of their leading men, the Comte was not wasting his time, but advancing his numerous and powerful artillery and concentrating its fire upon part of the walls. In vain the men of Dinant made sortie after sortie, fighting with desperation; they were repeatedly driven back by the superior forces of Charolais, and the bombardment continued. Never up to that time had so many guns been employed in a siege—the siege of Dinant was indeed looked upon as the surprise of modern warfare.

By August 21 a huge breach had been made in the walls of Dinant, but such was the fury of its defenders that the old Duc bade his son not to risk

an assault for fear that it should cost him too dear. For three more days the furious cannonade continued, and during that time letter upon letter was received in Liège, praying that the promised help might be sent at once, unless the Liégeois would see their brethren destroyed. It was a two days' march from Liège to Dinant, in spite of which the people of the larger city, persisting in their plan of doing things regularly and in order, determined to set out on this march only on August 26. If later, Liège were herself to undergo terrible sufferings at the hands of Burgundy, she would surely merit all that might befall her, as the recompense of her cruelly callous behaviour to Dinant at this period. Even when it had been decided that the men of Liège were to leave, there was yet further trouble and delay, because the Liégeois were not accustomed to march out to war without receiving their holy Standard from the Canons of Saint-Lambert. All of the Canons of the Chapter of Saint-Lambert had, however, left the city after the signing of the Piteous Peace, and none of the other churches would have anything to do with a matter which they said in no way concerned them. Thus August 26 went by, and the 28th arrived before the Liégeois could at length decide to set themselves in motion without receiving their banner in the usual way ; but they had delayed altogether too long.

For the last few days the state of affairs in Dinant had been that of a veritable hell upon earth. The continuous detonation of cannon shook the city to its foundations, while the air was lurid with the fire of the guns and murky under the thick and

stifling pall of smoke that hung over all. The streets and houses were full of the dead and dying—all was a vast scene of terrible desolation.

Despair now filled nearly all hearts in the doomed city, where the people declared that they would throw themselves on the Duc's mercy. "After all," said they, "he has a good heart, he will show us grace." "Do not trust him!" cried old Jean Guérin, "I believe in no one's mercy. Only give me the banner and I will carry it at your head, and live and die with you. If, on the other hand, you deliver yourselves up, you will not find me in your midst, for I shall make myself scarce."

The people would not listen to the white-headed burgomaster, and the copper-workers sent their submission. On August 26 the Comte de Charolais, with drums beating and colours flying, marched in triumph into the battered city of Dinant, his fools and jesters, according to ancient custom, indulging in frolic antics before him.

Several of the large towers remained still in the possession of brave and desperate men, who refused to yield; these the Comte determined to reduce later. In the meantime, although a terrible vengeance had been determined on, the cool and calculating Charles the Bold had resolved, like the people of Liège, to do everything regularly and in order. He accordingly gave strict instructions that there was to be no violating of women or pillaging indulged in by his soldiers until he should give the order that the town of Dinant was delivered over into their hands. Some of the disorderly soldiery were, however, too impatient to await the formal permission of Charolais to wreak their will,

and commenced to outrage the young married women and girls of Dinant. The Comte was not one of those who would brook any disobedience of his orders. He captured some of the offenders while ill-treating the women, caused them to be paraded up and down in front of his troops, and then strung them up to the gallows in sight of all.

Seeing this act of discipline, the unfortunate citizens of Dinant commenced to have hope. "Surely," thought they, "the Comte is going to treat us mercifully, the Duc has forgiven us." Accordingly they did everything in their power to show civility and kindness to the Burgundian troops quartered upon them in their houses.

Throughout August 27 the Duc de Bourgogne and Charolais consulted with the Town Council of the town of Bouvignes as to the nature of the revenge to be taken on their rival, Dinant. The delighted Councillors of Bouvignes then quite agreed with their rulers, that, to avenge the outraged Majesty of the House of Burgundy, no punishment could be too severe. The Comte then decided that, for two days, Thursday and Friday, August 28 and 29, the town of Dinant should be mercilessly given over to the sack of his whole army, while on Saturday, August 30, it should be burned, that not a single house should be left standing! The walls were also to be subsequently demolished. It will be noticed that Philippe, so falsely termed le Bon, the Good, was present in person to superintend the horrors with which he and his good wife Isabelle had determined that Dinant should be destroyed, wiped out from the face of the earth! For had not the people of Dinant been rude enough to call

his son Charolais "a priest's bastard," insulted himself likewise by dubbing him "the King of the toad-swamp"?

The Comte and the Duc, however, had finished by irritating their unpaid troops by their long and orderly delay. These remembered perfectly well that they had been promised that they should have their will of the city of Dinant, and were impatient to begin. It was absurd to keep them waiting like this! Perhaps they would be defrauded of the joys of sacking the town after all, while the Duc and the Comte filled their own pockets with the money extorted from the citizens!

The soldiery accordingly secretly gave each other the word, and determined to commence the enjoyment of the pleasures of the sack that very night of August 27. They resolved that they would have their suppers first, as afterwards they might have no time for eating!

The old Duc is said to have expressed the greatest indignation when the many thousands of soldiers in Dinant, taking the law into their own hands, commenced with a night of disorder on the Wednesday instead of with a day of disorder on the Thursday morning. Why this little matter should have distressed Philippe it is hard to say, unless it were perchance that those who said that the old Duc had a good heart were right, after all, and that he wished therefore kindly to allow the men and women of Dinant a last night in the beds which they would never occupy again!

Many there were, indeed, who would never occupy any bed again; for instance, those eight hundred whom, to please the people of Bouvignes, who had pointed

them out, the Comte had bound together in pairs and thrown into the Meuse to drown !

The sack of Dinant began, as the troops of Burgundy had arranged, immediately after their supper, when the soldiers, suddenly rising and drawing their swords threw themselves upon their hosts in whose houses they were quartered, demanding all that they possessed—including their wives and daughters ! We will not attempt to describe the horrors of the sack of Dinant, where thirty thousand more or less drunken beasts now robbed, ravished, and murdered as they chose. The terrors of the sack of Dinant had continued for a night, a day, and part of another night, and such of the army of Burgundy as had not killed each other while fighting over booty or women, or had not driven away with wagon-loads of looted property, remained in the city, either awake and drunk or asleep and drunk !

The towers to which the last defenders of the city had retired had not yet been reduced ; these brave men still held out defiantly while the pillaging hordes continued to concern themselves with other matters more interesting than the attack of towers which could not prove remunerative, and by which they might lose their lives.

The officers, great and small, of the triumphant army had joined in the wholesale looting of the town, while, by order of the Comte de Charolais, a large number of rich prisoners held for ransom were thrust into the Church of Nôtre Dame, and there retained. At the same time many precious articles, including the holy vessels of some of the churches, were stored in Nôtre Dame

Now the Comte knew that a levy *en masse* of the population of Liège, consisting of all between the ages of fifteen and sixty, was on the point of starting from that city, and was naturally anxious in what manner his troops, drunken with wine, blood, and pillage, would be able to resist the attack of the Liégeois.

According to the old Duc's tabulated programme of vengeance, Dinant was not to be burned down until August 30, upon which day those of Liège were expected to arrive. The Comte is, however, said to have conceived the idea of starting a fire sooner, with the intention of getting his troops out of the city and giving them a chance to sober down. Whether this be fact or no, between twelve and one o'clock of Friday night a blaze began in the quarters of Adolphe de Clèves, the cousin of Charolais. Instead of the Comte being able to control this fire, it soon got out of hand and spread. With fearful velocity it ran from roof to roof, until soon it became evident that to stop it was out of the question.

The flames raged in all directions, and many of the Burgundians must themselves have perished before the fire reached the Hôtel de Ville, which was stored with powder and blew up. Thence the fearful conflagration spread to the Church of Nôtre Dame, where all the rich prisoners were held. They were burned alive, and the stored articles of treasure destroyed with them. After this, the towers still held by the faithful few caught fire, and their defenders perished miserably like rats burned in a trap.

The soldiers and people of the city were now pouring out in all directions; all hope of saving any part of the town was abandoned and lucky he who could save

his own life! The priests and women and children were, by the Comte's orders, early driven out as prisoners, as it was the Duc's wish that these should be forced along in the direction of the advancing men of Liége, in order to show them the results of the vengeance of a Duke of Burgundy!

When the city had been burned down, the Comte de Charolais paid the people of Bouvignes utterly to destroy what remained of it. Any articles that had escaped from the flames were taken possession of by the Duc's appointed receivers; the wretched survivors of the people of Dinant were not allowed to retain so much as a cup and saucer!

CHAPTER XXVI

Awkward " Situation of Louis XI

1467

THE dilatory people of Liège had not yet started on their march to relieve Dinant, when the brave old Jean Guérin arrived from that place, to tell them that their sister city was no more, that it had been wiped off the face of the earth.

The populace, in its rage, rushed off to kill the Knight Raes and his companions who had held them back so long. Raes had, however, already shown a light pair of heels, but, while he escaped, one of his fellow-councillors was killed. It was now that the Liégeois committed perhaps the greatest error in the history of the city. Instead of marching off at once to fall upon the Burgundian army of drunkards, laden as it was so greatly with booty as to have been incapable of fighting in any sort of orderly formation, they sent messengers to sue for a renewal of the peace.

This Charolais was glad enough to grant under the circumstances, although it was owing to the counsels of the Comte de Saint-Pol that he did so. For Louis de Luxembourg did not wish to see Burgundy become stronger, by perhaps taking Liège after having destroyed Dinant, but wished himself to preserve the

balance of power between the Duchy and France, especially in Picardy. There the nobles would follow at his beckoning either against Louis XI. or against the Duc Philippe, whereas, should the latter become too strong in the neighbourhood of the Somme, Saint-Pol's importance would disappear.

Saint-Pol had stood on one side with his troops during the sack of Dinant, saying that he considered it wise to stand on guard for the defence of Charolais in case of accidents. He had no need to join in the sack, for he had been allowed to levy a ransom on a town depending on Liège in order to pay himself for coming to Namur.

That his advice to Charolais to grant peace to Liège, whether interested or not, was good is plain, for, from the testimony of Commynes, it is evident that the Burgundians, after their debauches, were terribly frightened of being attacked. He says: "During this night the Burgundian army was in great trouble and doubt. Some of them were for attacking us, and it is my opinion that the Liégeois would have had the better of us, had they done so." Thus the people of Liège lost the best chance that they would ever have of getting even with Burgundy, in spite of which they soon again allowed themselves to be stirred up against that Power by violent men, and also to be seduced by the honeyed words of Louis XI., who sent to conclude a new alliance with the city during the summer after the destruction of Dinant.

Louis kept his standing army in good condition, whereas that of Charolais, consisting as it did merely of feudal levies, would once more soon be a thing of the past. The King therefore might at any time, with the

help of Saint-Pol, actively interfere to annoy Burgundy seriously in the region of the Somme ; but, before taking any active measures Louis commenced to irritate Charolais on a feudal question, employing the thirty-six reformers under the presidency of Dunois for the purpose. We need not go into the matter of the controversy, beyond saying that, while the Comte had distinctly exceeded the rights of Crown-vassal towards his Suzerain, the *conseiller* of the Parliament sent to him by the Council of Thirty-six cleverly put him in an awkward position.

This was that he had no other way open to him of explaining his conduct than to say that he repudiated the Suzerainty of France, that he was an independent Prince. As his father, Philippe le Bon, died just about this time (June 15, 1467), this action Charles the Bold, having succeeded to the Ducal Crown, felt much inclined to take. It would have been to cut the Gordian knot, to settle once for all the galling question of a feudality which was always felt to be humiliating.

Unfortunately for Charles, he saw that to do this would have been but to play into his enemy's hands, for it would have given to Louis XI. the strong card in the pack. The King would have been able, in the future, to have posed as the protector of the French nobility against a foreigner, against one who was no Frenchman, but the enemy of France. By birth, by descent, and by language, Charolais, like his ancestors before him, was French—his descent was direct from the French Crown. However much he might hate the actual King of France, he did not therefore wish to dissociate himself from his ancient rights, or his connection with the other French Princes of the Blood.

He determined, however, to associate himself definitely with England, the old enemy of France, by the ties of marriage, and, notwithstanding that he was descended, on the mother's side, from the House of Lancaster, to take for his second wife, the sister of Edward IV., Margaret of York.

He sent his half-brother, the Bastard of Burgundy, with Olivier de la Marche to England, where, after a great tournament given by the Queen's brother in honour of the event, the Bastard signed the treaty of marriage on behalf of Charles the Bold.

Although truce after truce had been signed since the termination of the hostilities of the Hundred Years War between France and England, the two countries were still nominally in a state of war with each other. Since the defeat by Edward of York of the Lancastrians at Towton, and his assumption of the Crown of England in 1461, Louis had frequently sent to ask him to sign a regular peace, but in vain.

Now, fearing that this marriage of York with Burgundy would forbode a renewal of active warfare with France, the great lords of England, acting through the Earl of Warwick, sent to arrange a renewal of the truce without the knowledge or consent of Edward IV.

Warwick had caused his powers from the King to be sealed with the Royal Seal of England by his brother, the Archbishop of York, who was Chancellor of England, and had then proceeded to Rouen, where he was received in great state by all the clergy. To Rouen Louis came with his Queen to meet Warwick. Some of the Princesses of the Blood being also present, everything possible was done to make the stay of "The Kingmaker" and his suite as agreeable as

possible, many rich gifts being showered upon them. These included quantities of cloth and velvet, and, above all, large pieces of gold money, which Louis had caused to be minted on purpose to give to Warwick, whose good-will he desired above everything. These pieces of gold were worth ten ordinary crowns, and so large as to fill the whole hand.

While Edward IV. was so furious with his Chancellor that he deprived him roughly of the seals, and also of two manors, this continuance of the peace came at the most opportune moment for Louis. He not only greatly feared what Charolais might do on his accession, but was in trouble in the south, where Edward IV. was now allied with Castile, the old friend of France. Further, the Prince Ferdinand of Aragon had formed an alliance by marriage with the Princess Isabella of Castile, and these two Powers were thinking of making encroachments on France. Thus Louis feared for Rousillon and Perpignan, indeed the whole south might be dismembered. The King was further threatened through the action of his own sister Yolande, wife of Armadeus IX., who, having just become Duchess of Savoy, was negotiating with her brother, Charles de France, and the Duc de Bretagne, with a view to increasing the territory of Savoy at the expense of France.

It will thus be seen that it was not by any means for nothing that Louis had given the broad gold pieces to Warwick, for the immunity from any active English combination with Burgundy and Castile secured by the continuation of the truce, was to prove the King's absolute salvation.

Charles the Bold was himself in considerable

personal danger at this time in his Flemish city of Ghent. To celebrate his accession he made a State entry into this place, but unfortunately selected the day which was the feast of Saint-Liévin, when it was customary for all of the male population of Ghent to get drunk and indulge in mad pranks. The drunken citizens, carrying an image of their Saint in procession, saying that the Saint must pass by the road that he chose to select, roughly upset a stall where the new Duc's officials were seated to receive the dues of the city.

Then Charles the Bold, issuing from a house, stick in hand, furiously struck and abused one of the ringleaders of the intoxicated mob.

He was only then saved from being torn to pieces by the fact that a Flemish noble present reminded the men of Ghent of their oath, which was considered a matter of religion, never to lay hands upon the person of their Seigneur.

Having contrived to gain a balcony, Charles himself also addressed the assembled crowd, while using their own Flemish language. This pleased them vastly, and the men in the crowd, forgetting their anger, cried out loudly the words, "*Will-come!*" or welcome!

A great burly ruffian, however, climbed up alongside the new Duc and made a revolutionary speech, in which he asked the crowd if they did not wish to have their old customs and white hoods restored, the tax called *cueillotte* abolished, and those who governed the town and kept the Duc apart from his people punished.

When thousands of voices roared assent, the ruffianly man of the people addressed Charles the

Bold loudly: "My lord, now you know what it is that all these people want, and what they intend to have! Will be so good as to see to it? Forgive me if I have spoken in their name, but I have spoken for the best."

So saying, he climbed down the balcony again back into the crowd.

The disturbance, however, continued during several months, during which time, as Charles had been imprudent enough to take his young daughter Marie with him and likewise his late father's treasury, he could not attempt to leave Ghent.

The lower orders of Malines and Brussels and other towns of the Duchy of Brabant also rose at this time in favour of Jean de Nevers, who, instigated by Louis XI., had asserted his rightful claims. The nobility of Brabant, however, declared in favour of Charles the Bold and aided in the repression of "the villeins."

While being thus aided by the nobles of Brabant, Charles found also during the period of disturbance in Ghent, that some of the trades—notably the butchers and fishmongers—were well disposed towards himself. Some of their members would contrive to approach his person and tell him to have patience, that the time would come for him to punish "those bad people." To get out of Ghent, Charles found it, however, necessary to sign a few documents, grant a few privileges, and remit the hated tax called the *cueillotte*. After he had granted these concessions, he found himself comparatively popular in that city, which he eventually left with flying colours, well supported by the nobility and gentry of the whole

of the Belgian provinces. Charles the Bold, however, subsequently punished Ghent, by forcing that city to make the *amende honorable* before him.

With the *noblesse brabançonne* thus at his back, Charles began to think of falling once more upon Liège, which city he accused of having stirred up Ghent to revolt. At the same time he commenced to prepare for the struggle with Louis XI., and signed in the year 1467 treaties of alliance with the Duc de Bretagne, the King of Denmark, and the Duke of Savoy. Edward IV. of England likewise entered into a friendly alliance with Charles, while rejecting in an insulting manner the offers of friendship which Warwick brought back to him from Louis XI. at Rouen.

In France the situation was by no means pleasant for Louis. It was in vain that he sought to satisfy his brother with the ridiculous proposition of an appanage that he made him, for the attitude of Monsieur Charles was that he would have Normandy or nothing. This young Prince lived meanwhile in Brittany upon the money given to him by several great ladies and by his now bosom friend, Duc François. This latter Prince, notwithstanding that he had accepted the gift of a hundred and twenty thousand crowns from Louis, was employing this money to raise troops wherewith to fight on behalf of Monsieur Charles against the King.

Charles le Téméraire, or the Bold, proposed to join Duc François II. before long with sixteen hundred lances and twenty thousand archers, while declaring that the Count Palatine would soon bring ten thousand men from Germany to aid them both in

the recapture of Normandy. Finally, Monsieur Charles, who continued to call himself by his title of Duc de Normandie, the new Duc de Bourgogne, and François II., all entered into an alliance with that eternal plotter, Duc Jean II. d'Alençon. This Prince of the Blood, placing all of the strong places which he possessed in Normandy into the hands of François II., took refuge in Brittany.

In the middle of October 1467 Louis learned the disagreeable news that the Breton army had already invaded Normandy, and at the same time the King heard that Charles the Bold had assembled an immense army and was advancing on Liége, in spite of the empty menaces with which he had sought to restrain him.

The greatest crime of Liége was that of not paying up the huge sum imposed by the Piteous Peace. According to this treaty the city was to pay so much in money and so much in men, who were to pay with their heads. As the city would not give up these heads, a large extra sum was added as the value at which they were appraised. The whole immense sum which Liége had been condemned to pay was due by six monthly instalments. The citizens of Liége might have been able to find the necessary money had either the clergy or the other towns in the Principality of Le Liégeois consented to contribute their proportionate shares. This they refused to do, whereupon it became incumbent upon the ruined population of a city where trade had ceased to exist to find the whole amount. Terrible disorder now existed in Liége, where the people, filled with an evil spirit of cruelty, were executing each

other freely, upon a scaffold placed high up on an eminence, so that all might have a fair chance to view the bloody spectacle.

The hideous mirth accompanying these scenes of blood reminds one of similar scenes during the French Revolution. For example, it being determined to decapitate an unfortunate bourgeois, who was said to have surrendered Dinant to Charolais, the citizens of Liège imagined it humorous to accord him a "joyful entry," such as that accorded to the Comte upon entering Dinant. Preceded by fools and jesters, and to the sound of the trumpet and drum, the miserable man was marched into the city, and through its streets to the place of execution.

Raes had returned to Liège, and, while living in the Sanctuary of Saint-Pierre, where he was safe, ruled the city through his myrmidons—other authority there was none. While the country around was overrun by the men of the Green Tent, who murdered whom they chose, within the city the people lived in constant expectation of the aid from France which the envoys of Louis XI. constantly assured them to be on the way—the men-at-arms said to be already on the line of march. The French party in Liège, thinking to hasten their arrival, even solemnly placed the King's envoys in possession of Liège. The Bishop of Liège was, during this period, residing in the town of Huy, which Liège claimed as one of "her daughters," and the Liégeois, while declaring themselves, as ever, the subjects of the Church, whose rights they professed to respect, were anxious to get the person of Louis de Bourbon into their hands.

"Surely," said they, "without breaking the articles of our treaty, we can recapture our own daughter towns of Huy and Saint-Trond! Not that we would hurt the Bishop—oh dear, no!"

Huy was occupied by Burgundian troops, but Louis de Bourbon was a coward, who thought that his own skin was of more value to himself than the whole city of Huy to the Duc de Bourgogne. What, therefore, was the horror of Charles the Bold when he saw the whole Burgundian garrison of Huy come gaily marching home, with the Bishop of Liège in their midst! It was evident enough to the new Duc de Bourgogne, moreover, that it was not only Louis de Bourbon who was frightened of the Liégeois, but his own men likewise. Charles the Bold accordingly now reinforced his shaky feudatories by the introduction among their ranks of five hundred English soldiers. His friend and future brother-in-law, Edward IV., whom the continued War of the Roses alone prevented from breaking his truce openly with Louis XI., sent two thousand more Englishmen to Calais, to remain there at the disposition of Charles should he require them.

The situation had now indeed changed for the worse for Louis. Even one English soldier among the Burgundians meant a great deal at that moment—but five hundred! the threat was terrifying!

CHAPTER XXVII

The Awful Sentence of Liége

1467

THE King was perfectly well aware of his danger, and put the city of Paris in a state of defence just as though a large English fleet were already in the Channel. Moreover, he gave back to the citizens of the great city their old privileges, and restored to them their arms and banners. Considering the doubtful attitude of the Parisians towards him at the time of the treachery of Charles de Melun and throughout the whole war of the Bien Public, this was indeed a mark of confidence!

In order to assure the fidelity of those of the lower orders, in spite of his great necessity for money, he made further exemptions of taxation on Paris, making up the difference by increasing the imports on distant Provinces, such as Auvergne and Dauphiné. For Louis had quite made up his mind on one point, and this was that, so long as he held Paris, he could continue to be the King of France.

Thus it was not from the capital city that the great sums were drawn with which he was compelled to pay the pensions of the Princes—the Duc de Bourbon, Dunois,* and the rest.

* The famous Bastard of Orléans, Jean, Comte de Dunois, died in the year 1468.

To the Church and the University of Paris Louis now made some amends for old hardships, and, above all, showed his favours to the Parliamentarians—the men of the robe. He now shut his eyes when these Magistrates calmly treated their offices as mere family appointments, to be passed from brother to brother, uncle to nephew, or father to son.

The Church and the Parliament were, however, compelled to do their share in arming the troops, in finding money or men. A large army was thus soon raised in Paris, and placed under the command of a churchman, the Cardinal Balue.

While Louis was soon able to review many thousand troops in line under the leadership of this gallant priest, he also made himself more bourgeois than ever. The King had a pretty mistress at this time, and, contrary to his usual custom, we find him associating her openly with the Queen. Her name was Perette de Châlons, and Louis now sent the Queen, Perette, and the Duchesse de Bourbon, all three together, to call upon the wife of Dauvet, the First President of the Parliament. The three ladies took their baths at the President's house, in sign of friendship, played with the children and stayed to supper. Louis himself showed his friendly disposition with those of the bourgeoisie, and was often to be seen going to some private citizen's house to sup. He even became the godfather of the child of a bourgeois named Hesselin, whose child he held in his own Royal arms at the font during the baptismal service.

While openly protecting the bourgeoisie of Paris, and going so far as to cause a Norman monk to be

drowned who brought a false accusation against a couple of the citizens, the King endeavoured to augment the numbers in the city by more than questionable means. He caused proclamation to be made everywhere, to the sound of the trumpet, that "any one in danger of his life for the crimes of theft or murder could find a safe asylum in Paris." It would be interesting to know just what the bourgeois friends of Louis XI. thought of this proclamation!

While the Breton army became at once the masters of Alençon and Caen in Normandy, Louis did not venture to stir, for fear of the possible English army that Charles the Bold might let loose upon him.

In order to obtain grace for the Liégeois, Louis XI. now made up to the Pope. Although Paul II., who had succeeded Pius II., had excommunicated the people of Liège and Dinant, the King, by making certain concessions concerning the official registry of the abolition of the Pragmatic Sanction, obtained the good offices of the Pontiff. When, however, the Pope's Legate arrived in the presence of Charles the Bold, that Prince would not allow him to utter a word bearing on the subject of Liège.

One final attempt Louis made to defend the town which nothing but the army he did not send could save. The Comte de Saint-Pol, Constable of France, now proceeded in person on the King's behalf to Charles the Bold, when the Duc de Bourgogne met him roughly, telling him that, if he happened to be Constable, he it was who had made him so. He added, threateningly, as he mounted his horse and rode off, "If the King interferes in my business, it will not be to your advantage, fair Cousin!"

With this flea in his ear Saint-Pol left the angry Duc, who was just then in such a blood-thirsty mood that he had thought seriously of cutting the throats of fifty Liégeois hostages that he held in his hands.

For the people of Liége had marched out and were now in force before the town of Saint-Trond, which Liége had occupied, their garrison there being commanded by a Frenchman and bold follower of the King, named Renard de Rouvroy. At the village of Brusthem, with the thirty thousand men that, according to Commynes, Liége had put in the field, was another of the King's men, the Bailli de Lyon, whom Louis had employed to deceive the Liégeois by promises of immediate assistance. He had, however, himself been taken in, so was not to blame in the matter. He was also brave and, therefore, when the priests whom the Liégeois had persuaded to carry the sacred banner refused to proceed, the Bailli de Lyon took the standard from them and carried it himself. The force from Liége, which other chroniclers than the hostile Commynes declare not to have exceeded eighteen thousand in number, was commanded by Surllet de Bare, while Raes was also present, and, above all, the wife of Raes. This brave lady had already shown all the courage of a Joan of Arc in a fight before Huy. At Brusthem Madame de Raes was to be seen riding about in all directions, while animating the troops with her own ardour.

The ground upon which the battle of Brusthem was fought on October 28, 1467, was so marshy as to make the cavalry of Charles the Bold of but little avail. His followers feared greatly for their Duc in

this his first conflict after his accession, so great was known to be his angry courage and furious impetuosity. Charles does not appear, however, to have conducted himself during the conflict in any manner save that becoming to a cool and calculating commander. Owing to the impossibility of employing the Burgundian men-at-arms in the swampy ground, Charles found himself, however, in considerable danger of losing the day. The men of Liège with those of Tongres, although riddled with cannon-shot and arrows, charged with furious determination. For a time they were shaken, but when the Burgundian arrows had all been expended, they returned to the onslaught and killed about five hundred of the archers in hand-to-hand combat. The main body of the Duc's army was almost broken, when Charles loosed the whole of his large reserves, under Philippe de Crèvecœur, upon the now wearied men of Liège. De Crèvecœur charged with a loud shout, when the Liégeois were overthrown and compelled to retire to their city. Their losses were not, however, excessive in this battle, and, as Renard de Rouvroy continued to hold out for a few days at Saint-Trond, the bold Raes and the Bailli de Lyon, both of whom had survived the battle, contrived to put the defences of the city of Liège in good order, while awaiting the advance of the conqueror. Surllet de Bare had been killed on the field of Brusthem.

The heart of the greater number of the inhabitants was, however, no longer bold, and the churchmen insisted upon treating for peace on their own account. In the end, the priests treated not for themselves alone, but for all in the city. For themselves they had

nothing to fear, but the terms that they made for the people were wretched.

The town of Tongres had fallen, that of Saint-Trond also, and from each Charles had selected ten of the most notable men, whose heads he cut off. Therefore, when the Duc demanded admission for his forces to Liège, and the immediate delivery of three hundred men into his hands, the inhabitants at first kept the gates shut and refused to deliver over the prisoners. During the night, however, by cleverly making use of the fifty hostages, the Seigneur d'Humbercourt, acting for the Duc, contrived to obtain the surrender into his hands of one of the gates of Liège. This was a most fortunate circumstance for Charles the Bold, for the weather was wretched, and, with winter coming on, he could never have ventured to undertake a siege.

That strong man, the Knight Raes, with all of his following, decamped from the city immediately upon learning that d'Humbercourt had gained possession of a gate, and made good his escape ; but on the following morning the three hundred men demanded by the Duc were handed over to him. They were led out into the muddy plain clad only in their shirts, and compelled to fall miserably at the feet of Charles the Bold and sue for mercy.

Although he had not even fired a cannon-shot at the walls of Liège, the arrogant Duc determined to humiliate his enemies, the allies of Louis XI., by entering the city as conqueror. He caused, therefore, the massive gates to be torn from their hinges and thrown to the ground while he and his host marched in over them. From morning till night of Novem-

ber 17, 1467, the army tramped and tramped in over the fallen gates, among their ranks being the Prince-Bishop, Louis de Bourbon, whom Charles had brought with him to reinstate over the heads of his rebel subjects.

By the clergy and those of their following the Duc was received with respect. Candles, crosses, and images in hand, they stood in their surplices as he marched by. Opposed to them were the masses of the unarmed and scowling populace, the picture of despair. None yet knew what would be the sentence pronounced upon them by this terrible Duc de Bourgogne, whom they had done so much to provoke, yet, by their foolish procrastination at one time and too prompt surrender at another, never known how properly to resist. Oh how they longed at this moment that they had gone to the assistance of Dinant—then might they have been spared this terrible humiliation at the hands of their foe!

For eleven long, weary days Charles kept the unhappy people waiting to learn their doom. Then from the platform of the episcopal palace, where the Duc was seated in state with the Prince-Bishop by his side, was read out the sentence of Liège to the condemned crowds waiting in the square below. It was sweeping enough in all conscience, for it completely swept away all the rights of Liège, with its walls also, its gates, its ditches, its burgomaster, its sword of justice.

The Duc de Bourgogne now announced himself supreme in everything—both civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction were to be in his own hands; Louis de Bourbon, or any other Bishop, could for the future

only appoint the Sheriffs or administer justice as approved by Charles the Bold.

With the walls thrown down and the ditches filled up, Liège was in future to be reduced to the condition of a mere village, where all could come and go at will. Even the old organised bodies of the craftsmen were abolished, while, in the days to come, in matters of legal appeals the people of Liège would have to resort to the law-courts of their old enemies of Namur, Louvain, and Maestricht. There yet remained the question of the fine that the city was to pay. The trembling people, stunned at hearing themselves reduced to a condition of nothingness, had almost forgotten this, imagining that their punishment was already greater than they could bear.

Charles the Bold had, however, by no manner of means forgotten this question of money, and presently, therefore, the stricken populace heard the announcement made that, as a ransom and in addition to the original six hundred thousand florins imposed by the Piteous Peace, to buy its deliverance from its invader's army, Liège must pay a sum of no less than *one hundred and fifteen millions of florins* !

The stupefied people thought that now surely they had heard the whole of their terrible sentence ; but again they were deceived, for there was more to come. Twelve men, to be put to death or condemned to the torture and the prison, as the Duke of Burgundy should decide, were to be delivered into his hands.

When the whole of the awful sentence had been at length read out, Charles the Bold himself announced to the people of Liège that what they had

heard was correct, for such was his pleasure! The Duc added, benevolently, that, if the people conformed faithfully to the articles just read to them they would always find in him "a good protector and guardian."

A few days later the scaffold was erected in Liège, and the twelve selected citizens were led out in their shirts to execution. When nine of them had been decapitated in succession, Charles thought it time to show that he was really a very clement and forbearing Duc. He was pleased, therefore, to remit the sentence upon the other three wretches shivering in the wintry cold before the bloody block, around which lay in all directions the gory heads and headless trunks of their former fellow-citizens and friends.

The vengeance of Charles was not, however, yet quite complete. When he left the city of Liège he took away with him its most cherished symbol. This was a bronze column called the "Péron," at the base of which, for hundreds of years past, it had been customary that all proclamations should be announced. This precious column the Duc caused now to be erected in the city of Bruges, while forbidding Liège any longer to emblazon the beloved Péron in its coat of arms.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Louis proposes a Dangerous Visit

1468

By the time that Charles the Bold had completed these atrocities, Louis XI., trembling for the Duchy of Normandy, had declared himself in a state of war with his great vassal of Burgundy. At Louis the Burgundian Prince, with England behind him, however, snapped his fingers. The better to show his contempt for his cousin, the King of France, upon leaving Liège for Brussels Charles meditated committing some new horrors, and this time upon some Frenchmen from Tournai.

Tournai, which nowadays forms a town of the Belgian State, was then in that part of French Flanders controlled by the Duke of Burgundy, but inhabited by a bold race of men which insisted upon remaining French while surrounded by Flemings. Thus this city found itself in a state of perpetual siege. The Flemings would often cut off the supplies, and almost starve out the French inhabitants of Tournai, who, in turn, would mock at and laugh to scorn their neighbours as being "nothing but fat, overfed Flemings." The eternal quarrels between Frenchman and Fleming naturally required the inter-

vention of the Duc. Naturally also, he preferred to back up the side which seemed, for the moment, content to acknowledge his authority.

Having now summoned a number of men from Tournai to appear before him at Brussels, while these were trembling on their knees before him, Charles ordered them all to be branded on the forehead with the arms of Burgundy. Some nobles are said, by their intercession, to have saved the men of Tournai from the fearful infliction of the red-hot iron, but the cruel sentence was in itself a sign of the savagery with which the Duc regarded anything French—by which term we here mean, loyal to the King. For, French himself, Charles always preferred to employ French-speaking men from Burgundy or Franche-Comté in his various State offices. The Comtois, as those of Franche-Comté were called, were represented by various clever, if unscrupulous, men both in the service of Charles the Bold, and later. Notably we may mention among them Granvelle, for long the powerful Minister of the Emperor Charles V., the great-grandson of Charles the Bold.

In person this overbearing Prince is described as having been possessed of great and wiry strength. Never tired himself, he tired out all of those around him. His arms and legs were long and powerful, his face brown, and his dark hair abundant. Highly practised in the handling of arms, so strong and skilful was Charles that in any tournament he always overthrew his opponents with the lance. Among his Flemish and Dutch subjects he was far more popular than his father, Philippe le Bon. This may well have been owing to the fact that he spoke both

Dutch and Flemish as well as his native French, and moreover took a pleasure in constantly residing in various parts of the Low Countries. He is said to have been devout, and particularly addicted to the cult of the Virgin Mary. While Olivier de la Marche describes "*le Téméraire*" as having much good sense and being courteous in demeanour, and Chastellain also mentions "the good and profound sense with which he talked," we find it hard to reconcile his supposed courtesy of bearing with the terrible moods to which he was frequently wont to give way.

In the matter of money Charles was not only avaricious but very hard upon his feudal vassals, particularly so those of the rich Provinces of Flanders, Brabant, and Hainaut. Thus, while he locked away all of the rich treasure which he inherited from his father, Charles, being determined to live on his people alone, taxed his vassals in the three above-named Provinces together at the rate of nearly three million livres annually.

As his father before him, Charles the Bold became the Sovereign of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and thus the recognised head of the Chivalry of Europe. This Order was made use of by him at times to injure those whom he could not get at otherwise. For instance, when his cousin, Jean de Nevers, refused to appear before the Chapter of the Order, Charles caused his name to be besmirched before his fellow Knights by having it scratched off the rolls of the Golden Fleece, at the same time as his coat of arms was blackened. As head of the Golden Fleece, the Duc de Bourgogne continued to hold a great deal of power, nor could all

the gifts and bribes which Louis XI. continued to shower upon other Princes and great nobles prevent them from looking up to him in that capacity as their rightful leader. His dangerous importance was all the more evident to the King at this time when it seemed as if another war of the *Bien Public*, one in which England was invited to join, was being arranged against him. In self-defence, no longer relying upon himself alone, in April 1468 Louis appealed to his subjects and assembled the States-General of the Kingdom.

This assembly, to which sixty cities sent their delegates, was a very solemn function which remained in session for eight days. The King laid before it the troubles and divisions with which the country was threatened, particularly asking the delegates to consider the case of his brother, Monsieur Charles. The assembly then decided unanimously that Charles de Valois had no right to the Duchy of Normandy, and that the King had no right even to give it to him. On the other hand, it was determined that the King might give his brother any other County or Duchy, with an annual income of sixty thousand livres.

Immediately after the assembling of the States-General, Edward IV., who was offered twelve French towns by the Duc de Bretagne, offered also the funds required for the expense of occupying them, determined to enter the new coalition in France against the King. At the same time he sent over his sister, the Princess Margaret, to the town of Bruges to Charles the Bold, who was waiting there to receive and marry her. The King was meanwhile making great capital all over France upon the subject of the monstrous union of

Brittany and England, and of Burgundy and England, in order to promote a new English invasion of France. As a result, the Duc de Bourgogne became most unpopular, an unpopularity which emboldened the Comte de Saint-Pol, always plotting, always floating as he was from one side to the other, to commit a singular outrage against Charles the Bold. While the Duc was waiting for his bride at Bruges, Louis de Luxembourg had the effrontery to march into the place escorted by troops and to the strains of martial music, while having the Constable's Sword of France borne in state before him. Charles complained loudly to his former friend of this strange proceeding, whereupon Saint-Pol replied arrogantly that Bruges belonged to the Kingdom, that he was the Constable of France, and that it was his rightful privilege to go about everywhere in this manner.

As Saint-Pol was the uncle of the Queen of England and had come to attend the wedding, the Duc could not well say much about this incident, but upon what shadowy grounds the slippery Comte ventured to assert that Bruges was a fief of the French Crown we are unable to explain. At all events, Charles the Bold took the opportunity of asserting his own independent rule over Bruges in the most emphatic manner. Although the city was thronged with nobles from all over Europe to be present at the splendid marriage fêtes, when one of these nobles, a young man of very high family, committed a murder, Charles, despite the prayers of the nobility caused the culprit to be immediately decapitated.

On the day after this execution, July 3, 1468, took place the Duc's marriage with Margaret of York.

She was accompanied by an English Bishop, while English archers carried her litter to the palace where Charles, with his mother, awaited her. The Cardinal Balue was present at the ceremony and took part in it, he having come to Bruges as a spy on behalf of Louis XI. Another Cardinal, who was a Papal Legate, also assisted at the marriage. He had come to beg for a reprieve of payment from Liège, where the husbands complained that they had already been compelled to strip their wives of their rings and waist-buckles, and were quite unable to pay their share of the instalment of the fine now due.

Charles refused to listen to the Legate's prayers on behalf of the poor Liégois, and, his marriage accomplished, he accompanied his bride to the nuptial couch, when a judgment was almost the reward of his hard-heartedness. "When they were both in bed," says an old English chronicle, "the house took fire, and the Duc and the Princess were with difficulty rescued."

During the fêtes and tourneys which followed the wedding, Louis XI. obtained a truce which was to last until August 1. The Duc, after himself taking part in some of the tourneys, suddenly left his newly made bride and went off to Holland in order to raise the dues which he had the right to levy on his Dutch vassals upon the occasion of his nuptials.

During this truce with Charles the Bold, Louis, who feared what might succeed it, redoubled his efforts in Normandy. He had signed a treaty with that constant traitor, the Duc d'Alençon, the results of which proved very advantageous in the Duchy, and in a few weeks Louis was able to send also a large army into Brittany. There, upon September 10, 1468, the Duc

François II. was compelled to sign a treaty of peace at Ancenis. The Duc de Bretagne could, by this peace, no longer support the pretensions of Charles de Valois to the Duchy of Normandy, but the King granted to his brother a yearly pension of sixty thousand livres and promised to give him another appanage. When a herald from François II. came to announce this treaty of peace to Charles the Bold that Prince was seized with such a fit of fury that he wished to hang the messenger, for had he not sent five hundred Burgundian soldiers to aid François by holding Caen? The Duc had indeed assembled an army to help his allies, and had just crossed the river Somme on his way to join them. And now Normandy was lost! his expedition useless! What was now to follow in France?

Among those about Louis XI. there were two parties. Of these the military party, headed by Antoine de Chabannes, was anxious to pursue the war to the bitter end. "By a hundred thousand devils! strike right home! That proud rebel Charles, false, accursed Englishman that he is, should be broken on the wheel for his sins!" Such was the cry of the party of Chabannes.

The other and more prudent party was for peace, and to their counsels Louis lent a willing ear, for he feared the result to the Kingdom of a desperate struggle. He accordingly sent several embassies to Charles, but the overtures made for peace had no result. The King then sent to Charles a present of sixty thousand golden crowns, and, having at the same time expressed a wish to go and see him in person to try to arrange a peace, with great difficulty obtained the



CHARLES THE BOLD

promise of a safe-conduct from the suspicious Duc de Bourgogne.

Many had strongly advised Louis against risking this personal interview with his enemy, but he was strongly of the opinion that he could accomplish in person that which no envoys could arrange for him. As young men, while he had been a refugee in Burgundy, he and Charolais had been on terms of friendly intimacy ; Louis imagined, therefore, that he might be able adroitly to lead back the Duc to their old terms of youthful friendship. The King further remembered that, during the conferences before Paris at the time of the war of the Bien Public, Charolais had shown no distrust of himself, even once venturing with him unattended within the barrier gates of Paris. Since Charles had thus trusted to his honour, surely he in turn could rely upon the word of Charles, who, the head of the Golden Fleece, always prided himself upon keeping his word. As one gentleman meeting another gentleman, Louis therefore concluded that he could visit the Duc de Bourgogne in safety.

Among those about him there were two who recommended the King to take this momentous step. One was the Cardinal Balue, the other Louis de Luxembourg. The Comte de Saint-Pol had, however, at first been of a different opinion, but he changed the tenor of his advice to the King after a while, when he wrote advising him to go to see Charles. This advice of Saint-Pol may well have been given with perfidious intent.

The Duc was now with his army at the strong place of Péronne, one of the Somme cities which, it

will be remembered, he had recently captured from his cousin, Comte Jean de Nevers.

Upon the side of Charles the Bold there had also been considerable indecision. While his courtiers advised him this way and that, Charles was at the same time unwilling and willing to receive as a friend the King with whom a state of war existed. He, however, wrote very friendly and flattering letters to the Cardinal Balue, calling him "very dear and especial friend," and at the same time made use of the services of his confidential valet, or gentleman of the bedchamber, to go and personally arrange the matter of the visit with Louis XI.

The King and the valet held some long confidential talks together, but it was only after the Duc had actually pocketed the first half of the large sum of money that Louis had promised to remit that the King finally made up his mind to carry out his intention.

The army of Louis was now in a good condition. He had signed his treaty of Ancenis with the Duc de Bretagne; had recovered likewise, through the aid of the Duc d'Alençon, most of the important cities of Normandy, with exception of Caen, where Charles the Bold still kept his five hundred men. Why, therefore, cried scornfully those who were not in his confidence, instead of boldly attacking the Duke of Burgundy, instead of driving him out of the Somme cities, should the King of France go to him as a suppliant? Why pay him largely for the favour of being allowed to visit him? The reason, which those who cried out thus could not see, but which we can see now, as Louis himself could see

then, was the presence of those five hundred Burgundian soldiers in Caen, through which city it would be easy for Charles the Bold to introduce into France the army which Edward IV. was at that moment holding ready at Portsmouth.

Marguerite d'Anjou, the unfortunate Queen of Henry VI., was at that time a refugee in France, at Harfleur. Should Edward invade France, it was certainly within the power of Louis to be revenged upon him by sending, in return, his cousin Marguerite to England, to endeavour to reconquer her lost Kingdom for her imbecile husband. But, with a hostile English force already upon his shores, and with Charles the Bold also in France, what troops could Louis spare for this purpose? Decidedly, thought the King, it would be a far cheaper and better arrangement in every way could he, without more actual warfare, come to a personal arrangement with the enemy already within his gates.

At last he received his safe-conduct from this enemy, and nothing could have been more explicit than the terms of this document as written by the Duc de Bourgogne: "You can safely come, stay, and remain, and you can safely return to the places of Chauny and Noyon, at your good pleasure, as often as it may please you, without any hindrance being made to you, for anything that may exist or any cause that may arise." This document, which is still preserved in the Bibliothèque at Paris, was drafted by the half-brother of Charles, the Bastard of Burgundy, aided by Philippe de Crèvecœur, and it was dated October 8, 1468.

Nothing could indeed have seemed more honour-

able and straightforward. Therefore, notwithstanding the fact that the King had received a hint from Saint-Pol to the effect that the Vidame of Amiens declared that the Duc was planning to take advantage of the King in some way, Louis resolved to proceed in person to visit the powerful Duc de Bourgogne at Péronne.

CHAPTER XXIX

Louis XI. in Prison at Péronne

1468

TRUSTING to the faith of one gentleman to another, Louis XI. arrived at Péronne, accompanied only by about a hundred persons, on October 19, 1468. He had with him the Duc de Bourbon, his Constable, the Comte de Saint-Pol, and the Cardinal Balue. The Duc received the King with great honour, and after the King and Charles the Bold had embraced tenderly, they entered the city together, Louis with his arm resting upon the Duc's shoulder. The King was not at first installed in the massive castle, but given commodious lodgings in the hôtel of one of the Duc's officers. Hardly had he settled in his lodging, than he learned some intelligence which tended greatly to disturb the confidence with which he had placed his head within the lion's jaw. This was that various persons whom he hated, and who hated him, had likewise just entered Péronne. The most notable of these was his brother-in-law, that turbulent Prince of Savoy, Philippe de Bresse, whom Louis had shut up for a couple of years in the Château de Loches. Another was Antoine du Lau, Sire de Châteauneuf, who had recently been arrested, but had made his

escape just as the King had been about to shut him up in the famous iron cage invented by that humane prelate, Cardinal Baluc. Du Lau had been the confidant of Louis for years in exile, but recently the King had found him to be but a false friend, who sold his secrets to his enemies. All those who had aided in the escape of the Sire de Châteauneuf had been put to death.

Thibaud de Neufchâtel, Maréchal de Bourgogne, was another personal enemy of the King who had arrived at the Court of Burgundy with du Lau, both of these declaring themselves the partisans of Louis' brother, Monsieur Charles. It was impossible for the King to feel anything but uneasy when he saw these bitter foes received openly and in a friendly manner by Charles the Bold, at the same time that he was himself his guest.

He asked, accordingly, that he might be accommodated in the gloomy old Château de Péronne, where he fancied that he would be in greater security than in the town. For this castle, with its massive walls, was a regular prison.

In the meantime great bands of banished men, who, having been ejected from Liège, Dinant, and other places by Charolais, had been living in the forests of the Ardennes, had arrived in the city of Liège, where, in the absence of their Bishop, they had begged the Papal Legate who was present to intercede for them. These poor wretches had more the appearance of wild beasts than men, being covered with nothing but rags and the long, matted hair and beards which they had allowed to grow. The Legate had received them kindly, and by so doing had

prevented them from committing outrages in Liège, where, in their misery and starvation, they had at first threatened the priests, whom they had accused of being the authors of their misfortunes.

D'Humbercourt, the Duc's lieutenant in Liège, had recently retired with his garrison to the town of Tongres, but the Bishop, instead of, as requested by the Legate, coming in person to Liège to calm the bands of banished men, now went to this nobleman and took counsel with him as to how to treat the outlaws. These, as Louis de Bourbon knew well, had been encouraged by the emissaries of Louis XI. to return to Liège, when summoned thither by a warlike Canon to aid in the deliverance of the city from the oppression of Burgundy.

Had it not been for his fear of the Duc and his army, the Bishop would not now have been at all averse to throwing in his lot with the King and the people of Liège; but his terror of the Duc de Bourgogne was so great that he preferred to take up an attitude hostile to his subjects the Liégeois.

These events had taken place about a month prior to the arrival of Louis XI. at Péronne, and Louis de Bourbon was present at Tongres with the Seigneur d'Humbercourt on the day of the first meeting of the King and Charles the Bold. At the close of the following day, after Louis had been installed in the huge, prison-like Château de Péronne, terrible and exciting news was brought to the Duc. This, delivered in tragic tones by those enemies of the King to whose interest it was to make everything appear in the worst light, was to the following effect:

“The people of Liège have fallen upon Tongres,

killed the Bishop, the Seigneur d'Humbercourt, and the Canons who there had taken refuge with the Bishop!"

The rage into which Charles the Bold fell upon receipt of this news, which has been described by Commynes, then his Chamberlain, and by Olivier de la Marche, was terrible in the extreme, and it lasted for three days.

The first impulse of the King's personal enemies was to go to the Duc and persuade him to put the false Louis to death at once. Not heeding these, Charles the Bold, however, closed the gates of the Château, and, putting a guard of archers upon them, made Louis XI. a close prisoner in the prison which he had himself selected to dwell in.

From the manner in which Charles the Bold raged and stormed, the King might have killed the whole of his family, whereas it is evident that the death of Louis de Bourbon, of whose recent leanings towards France he was well aware, and whom he had treated shabbily, was in nowise a cause of sorrow to the Duc de Bourgogne. If it were a misfortune for any one, it was so for the King, who had placed all the power of central France in the hands of the Bishop's brother, the Duc de Bourbon, who had come with Louis to Péronne.

Louis XI., when coming to Péronne, had evidently forgotten the two emissaries sent by him some months earlier to stir up the banished vagabonds, most of whom had taken refuge in French territory. He now, however, was in a terrible fright at the result of his imprudence. He knew his life to be in danger, could, moreover, see from his window a turret of

the castle in which, as history related, a previous King of France had been murdered. This had been Charles the Simple, put to death in the Château de Péronne by the Comte de Vermandois.

Louis did not, however, lose his head ; he had a very large sum in gold with him, and handed at once fifteen thousand golden crowns to Cardinal Balue to distribute among the principal officers of the Duc. While pocketing half of this himself, Balue gave away the rest with a good result. The "Great Bastard" of Burgundy and Commines both getting their share, were among those who advised Charles the Bold that he would have little to gain by following the counsels of Philippe de Bresse, Châteauneuf, and others, and setting up Charles de Valois as King of France in place of his brother. Better, said these, to take advantage of the King's position to force a good treaty of peace out of him, one which should surrender to Burgundy all the old contested points.

This the Duc de Bourgogne determined to do, especially as he saw the way to humiliate Louis in a manner to morally kill him in the eyes of Europe.

Repairing to the King in his prison, with an outwardly courteous demeanour, but a voice which did not conceal his fury, Charles the Bold now proceeded to extract such a treaty from his Suzerain Seigneur.

Now comes in the point of the joke, for, beneath all this tragic demeanour of the Duc, an ironical jest was concealed.

While forcing Louis XI., in retribution of his supposed instigation of the murder of Louis de

Bourbon and d'Humbercourt, to yield to him all that he desired, Charles the Bold must well have been aware of the fact that neither the Bishop nor his own lieutenant had been killed at all!

For several days Burgundian refugees had been arriving at Péronne from Tongres, during October 11, 12, and 13, 1468, and these had some of them been expressly sent by the successful Liégeois to relate the true facts of the case.

These were that, while Louis de Bourbon, unharmed, had been escorted respectfully back by his subjects to Liège, the Seigneur d'Humbercourt had been set at liberty on parole. One or two Canons who had been killed were traitors, men who had counselled the Liégeois to revolt and then deserted them. Some unmannerly persons had, it was true, insulted the Bishop, but these the Liégeois had themselves hanged on the nearest trees. Upon entering Liège the Bishop had been received with a triumphant oration, whereupon Louis de Bourbon, much moved, had addressed the people saying: "My friends, I see that both you and I have been ill-advised to make war upon each other in the past; let us be good friends in the future."

All this was concealed from the King, who in the most lamb-like manner drew up, in the form of "Royal Letters," a treaty which, among other points, made concession concerning a matter which had caused continual trouble in the past. This was that, the four principal law-courts of Flanders, the tribunals of Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, and the country appertaining to Bruges, should no longer be expected to carry their appeals to the Parliament of Paris. In addition, Louis XI. en-

gaged himself to give his brother, in appanage, the Counties of Champagne and Brie. These, lying next to the territory of Burgundy, would give Charles the Bold increased facilities to invade France at any time.

The Duc had not finished with the King when he had forced him thus to subscribe to all that he demanded, for now he intended to make Louis stultify himself, behave in such a way as to make all the world cry out what a low hound he was.

Charles said : " Now will you not come with me to Liège, to help me to avenge the treason that the Liégeois have brought upon me ? The Bishop was a relative of yours, of the Blood Royal of France ! you would no doubt like to see his murderers punished ? "

What could Louis, trembling in danger of his life, do but accede to this request ? He was compelled to promise his presence before Liège, to attack the wretched people who would not be disillusioned, but even yet looked up to the good and glorious King of France as their one and sole protector in the world !

While by his imprisonment the terms of his safe-conduct had been so flagrantly broken, that the King of France was not at this time stabbed or smothered in his prison, was probably, more than for any reason, owing to the fact that he had one good, faithful friend without the walls, and this good friend in command of a powerful army on the frontier. This was his former enemy, that old *écorceur*, Antoine de Chabannes, Comte de Dammartin.

Dammartin was not anxious to see the elevation of the Duc de Normandie to the throne, not at all anxious to see the friends of that Prince triumphant. For he had recently flayed one of these friends, in the

person of Charles de Melun, and preserved his skin as a memento! This bold and savage old commander therefore entirely disregarded two letters from Louis, which had evidently been dictated by his captor, in one of which the King ordered Dammartin to disband his army, in the other to retire with it to the borders of Spain.

Antoine de Chabannes answered these letters to the person from whom he knew that they had really emanated, writing to the Duc de Bourgogne that, if he did not send back the King, the whole of France would come and fetch him.

The King, however, in his letters to this sturdy lieutenant and others rightly alarmed upon his account, took pains to make it appear as if he was of his own accord, and willingly, about to accompany Charles the Bold to Liège. But no one was deceived when Louis wrote: "Be sure that never in my life did I go upon any journey with more pleasure than I do on this one," or again: "M. de Bourgogne will press me to leave as soon as he will have done at Liège, and desires my return even more than I do myself."

All the King's well-wishers and partisans knew perfectly well the great danger which he was in from the savage temper of Charles, who might at any moment, upon any pretext, take his life. They were indeed aware of the fact that even a hasty word falling from the Duc's lips, such as, "I wish I were rid of him," would be enough to cause the death of Louis at the hands of the unscrupulous partisans of his brother Charles. The Great Bastard and Philippe de Commines were, however, persuading the Duc that he should keep his word and eventually allow the King to depart in safety.

CHAPTER XXX

Louis a Laughing-stock

1468

BEHOLD the King of France released from prison, and, with a certain number of his own French retainers, accompanying the army of the Duc Charles to destroy Liège !

Nor is the Very Christian King by any means downcast in demeanour ; on the contrary, he is of most joyful appearance, marching along with many a merry quip and jest, while vowing that his fair Cousin of Burgundy is the best fellow in the world ! Was there ever such a good dissembler as Louis XI. ? All of those around him were convinced that he was indeed going to the slaughter of his deceived friends, the Liégeois, as to a veritable party of pleasure. Well was he playing the ignoble part that had been assigned to him, that of tearing down with his own shamed and dishonest hand the fleurs-de-lys of France, which he had granted to Liège as a charge upon her coat of arms.

The motto of the Universal Spider was, however, that if a thing was worth doing at all it was worth doing thoroughly, and not for the satisfaction of wearing a frown upon his countenance was he going

again to risk the life and liberty with which he had escaped from his gloomy prison of Péronne.

There did not seem much possibility of resistance for Liège, which possessed now neither money nor cannons, neither walls nor ditches. Despite the rumours which they heard, the inhabitants could not believe the report that the King of France was coming against them, yet so strange were the rumours that were in circulation that some were found to credit the extraordinary story that the King was about to conduct the Duc de Bourgogne to Aix-la-Chapelle, where he would have him crowned as Emperor upon the throne of Charlemagne.

The troops of Burgundy had scarcely arrived before Liège than, in their furious despair, some four thousand from the city charged out upon the forty thousand of Charles the Bold, nor when driven back was their courage diminished. Regaining the town, they fell upon and cut to pieces the advance-guard of the Duc's army, which had taken advantage of the absence of the armed inhabitants to enter the streets for purposes of pillage.

The Papal Legate, who was a rich and benevolent old Roman Seigneur, now contrived to save Louis de Bourbon from the fury of the people, employing a trick for the purpose. The Legate persuaded the inhabitants of Liège that it was requisite that he should take their Bishop and show him to the Duc, to prove that he was alive, in order that the town might be spared. The old Roman priest then, in the name of the Pope, implored Charles the Bold to show mercy to Liège, to take everything else, but to spare the lives of the people ; but the Duc turned a deaf ear

to his prayers—he had determined to kill all. Hearing of this savage determination, one night a band of about six hundred men, many of whom were wood-cutters and charcoal-burners from the neighbouring district of Franchimont, in the Ardennes, surprised the Duc's army. These bold men penetrated to the houses in which the Duc and the King had established their quarters, and killed many of those around them. In the confusion, or perhaps intentionally, those in the King's house, firing from the windows, killed as many Burgundians as men of Liège during this night-alarm. During the fighting many of the brave wood-cutters, still not knowing upon which side Louis XI. wished to be, could be heard calling out, "Vive le Roi!"

The greater number of those who had thus rushed the Duc's badly guarded camp perished in the encounter, and on the following morning the Duc, in a fury, wished at once to deliver an assault on the city. When Louis demurred, Charles the Bold sneered at him, telling him to go off to Namur if he was afraid. This did not, however, suit the King, who had mounted the white cross of Burgundy and was determined to carry through his ignominious part to the last. Louis, indeed, showed the greatest energy in the fighting upon the occasion of another sortie, when the Duc seemed to lose his head, taking the command and giving orders, so that the astonished Burgundian soldiers scarcely knew whether the King or Charles the Bold were their actual commander. When the city was eventually stormed, from two sides at once, after an eight-days' siege, the King was to be seen, bare sword in hand, shouting, "Vive Bour-

gogne!" in the middle of the troops in the streets. This storming was an easy matter, as it was of the nature of a surprise, taking place during the dinner-hour on a Sunday, which day the wearied inhabitants of Liège had imagined would be respected by their assailants.

The Burgundian army, after entering and joining forces, divided itself into four quarters, each of which selected a section of the town for slaughter and pillage. During these looting operations a large number of the inhabitants were fortunate enough to be able to escape from Liège. While the robbing of the houses and murdering of such as resisted continued, Louis was quietly eating his dinner at the Bishop's Palace. The Duc, meanwhile, was killing some of his own followers to prevent them from breaking into and robbing Saint-Lambert.

When, after three hours of street fighting, all resistance had ceased in the city, Charles the Bold joined Louis XI. in the Bishop's Palace, and asked what he should do with Liège. After praising up the Duc's personal bravery to the skies, the King replied, in a manner to for ever crown his infamy, and as though he were relating an anecdote: "My father, Charles VII., had a high tree near his palace in which the noisy rooks made their nests. They worried him, and on three successive occasions he had the nests torn down. Finding that the wretched rooks were beginning to build a fourth time, my father caused the tree to be torn up by the roots; and after that he was able to sleep better!"

This was the manner in which Charles commenced to treat Liège at once, several hundred being murdered

in cold blood that very Sunday. In one church, after killing the congregation on their knees, the sacred chalice was snatched by the Burgundians from the hands of the priest after he had consecrated and drunk the sacramental wine.

The Duc stayed at Liége until he had commenced the burning of the city, which process he ordered to be continued bit by bit in a systematic manner. While leaving behind him a force to kill all of the inhabitants who could be caught, he started off himself to overrun the surrounding country, and to butcher all those refugees whom he might find wandering in the neighbouring mountains or freezing in the leafless woods.

The cold which had set in was terrible, and, according to Commynes, many of the soldiers employed in this expedition lost hands and feet from frost-bite. As for the condition of the unhappy wretches who were being hunted down—men, women, and children—the same authority says that he saw a woman frozen to death immediately after having given birth to a child!

The execution of the inhabitants of Liége was not a thing that could be accomplished in a hurry. For three months, according to Adrien, it was systematically continued, during which period nearly all those who were found concealed were drowned in the river Meuse.

With reference to this brutal and cold-blooded destruction of human life, Lenglet quotes a letter from Antoine de Loisey, one of the officials left behind by the savage Duc de Bourgogne, who, writing from what remained of Liége, says: "We do not trouble ourselves much at present in matters of justice, except

that every day *we burn and hang* all the Liégeois whom we catch, and those of the prisoners whom we find to have no money with which to pay a ransom. The said city has been pretty well looted (*butinée*) and cleared out, so that since the fires I have had the greatest difficulty to find even this piece of paper on which to write to you, and only in the end got it out of an old book."

The above letter speaks for itself—there indeed was precious little left of Liège when Charles the Bold had, at length, slaked his vengeance upon the allies of the King of France.

As for Louis XI., he remained before the city for five or six days after its fall, only leaving just before the Duc departed on his wood and mountain scouring expedition. He did not feel sure to the last whether or no Charles the Bold would allow him to depart, as he had made no reply to the feelers which Louis had caused to be thrown out. The King at length addressed his jailer in plausible tones, saying that, if he had nothing more for him to do, it would be as well if he now should take his departure for Paris, in order to publish the terms of the recently made treaty of peace. Louis added, jovially : " Next summer, if you like, I will come and see you in Burgundy ; we will pass a month together, and have a fine time of it."

Charles the Bold allowed Louis to go, but not until he had made him read over the articles of the treaty once more, and declare that he was perfectly satisfied with all of its provisions. This last pill the King had swallowed pleasantly, without making any grimace, when, to his delight, he got away in safety. As a French writer has pithily remarked : " In

departing, the astonished Louis felt himself all over and found that, by some miracle, he had nothing missing—unless it were, perchance, his honour ! ”

In another respect Louis XI. had lost also : this was in the eyes of the world, which had hitherto taken him for an astute and clever Monarch. Now the world, big and little, laughed at him for a fool, who had walked straight into a trap like any stupid school-boy. That a past-master in the art of lying and deception had allowed himself to be caught like this was too good a joke not to be made the most of. While all kinds of pleasantries in verse and in prose, in paintings and sketches, celebrated the discomfiture of the King of France, while, lowered in the eyes of others, he was also lowered in his own, he yet had one consolation. This was that, if he had been a fool, Charles the Bold, in letting him go, had been a bigger fool than himself ! He had signed a treaty, it was true, but with his liberty need he keep its provisions ? The Duc de Bourgogne had broken his word by making him a prisoner after giving him a safe-conduct, and now had weakly released him simply upon his giving his own word—well, two could play at the same game ! Beyond being laughed at for the manner in which he had allowed himself to be trapped, Louis XI. suffered little for the double game which he had played with reference to Liège.

Charles had hoped thoroughly to humiliate his enemy in his honour, and we find that partial chronicler Chastellain exclaiming : “ He is the most humiliated King that has existed for a thousand years.” But, as a matter of fact, the political morals of the day were so lax that none except the Liégeois themselves cared

in the least about the manner in which the King had treated those unfortunate people. That Princes and Kings changed sides and policies every month when it suited them was the lesson to be learned daily. To do so it was only necessary to watch the behaviour of a François II. of Brittany, a Jean II. d'Alençon, a Duke of Milan, a King of Aragon or Naples.

In the game of policy commenced when Louis went to Péronne, and continued when Charles the Bold made him a prisoner for killing a Bishop who was not dead, Louis was not, after all, the only one that suffered. For Charles, and the counsellors of Charles, had also allowed themselves to be caught—yes, to be thoroughly entrapped by the bland suavity with which the King had so willingly acceded to all their demands. Otherwise, what were they doing—these long-headed men—when they let him go free without exacting from him the slightest guarantee? Not a County or a Duchy, not a hostage or a sum of money, did Louis leave behind him as a pledge! No, only his word—the word of a Louis XI.! In all conscience, the Duc de Bourgogne must before long have realised that he might as well be termed Charles the Simple as Charles the Bold!

The King, on the other hand, had gained something. He had made the personal acquaintance of those about his great enemy, and had feed them highly. They had found him by no means as hard to get on with as their own unreasonable Sovereign. The result was that he had gained friends in the country of his foe, some of whom—Philippe de Commines, for instance—before long thought that they could not do better than change masters.

CHAPTER XXXI

Louis, Warwick, and Marguerite

1470—1471

IN taking the hazardous step of placing himself in his rival's power at Péronne, Louis had been prompted by the fixed idea that Charles the Bold had the whole of the might of England behind him. In that country the strange farce was now to be witnessed of Warwick the Kingmaker causing a great number of the people to change sides, so that many who, hitherto following his lead, had cried, "Hurrah for York!" were now shouting "Lancaster for ever!" The fact was that in England there was now another war than that of the Roses, and this was the war of French gold versus Flemish gold. The opinion of the Duc de Bourgogne was the same as that of Louis XI.: he imagined that, in marrying the sister of England's King, he was espousing the whole country of England, with her commerce into the bargain. For his own part, speaking and writing English, Charles looked upon himself as a very thorough Englishman.

However deceived Charles may have been, Louis was now in low waters. He depended upon Richard, Earl of Warwick, to win him the support of a country in which his credit was not what it had been formerly,

for Warwick was now out of favour with the rich merchants of London no less than he was with Edward IV. These Londoners, in seeing him oppose the marriage of the King's sister to the rich and powerful Duke of Burgundy, had imagined that he was closing to them the lucrative trade with Flanders. Seeing that Louis was helpless to do anything to interfere with his designs, Charles thought that this was a good time for him to indulge in some long-cherished ambitious schemes in the direction of Germany. He had his eye upon various States and districts which were under the feudal suzerainty of the Empire, and these he sorely needed to round off his heterogeneous collection of Provinces, in order the better to form the whole into a Kingdom.

Upon the lower Rhine was the Duchy of Gueldre, or Gelderland, and upon the Upper Rhine the Landgravate of Alsace, which lay convenient to Franche-Comté. This latter belonged to Duke Sigismond of Austria, a spendthrift Prince who was ever in difficulties, either on account of want of cash for his pleasures or of quarrels with his Swiss neighbours.

When Sigismond offered to pledge his possessions in Alsace and the Black Forest, Charles jumped at the offer, not seeing or not caring about the risk to himself of becoming involved with the Empire and the Swiss Cantons. He hoped, at the same time, by establishing his ally, Louis' brother, in Champagne, between his Ardennes and Burgundy, to open up for himself a convenient means of passage between his scattered Provinces on the side of France. Louis, however, was not sleeping, and had no intention of playing into the Duc's hands. In spite of his recent forced treaty

of Péronne, now that he was free once more the King had no intention of giving Champagne and Brie to his brother Charles. Instead, he offered him nearly the whole of the old Duchy of Aquitaine, with the title of Duc de Guyenne. This province of Guyenne, with Bordeaux, was that most dear to England, to whom it had belonged for hundreds of years, and it was evident that, should Monsieur Charles accept it, his friendship with England and her ally, Brittany would be broken.

His favourite, Odet d'Aydie, Seigneur de Lescun, a Gascon opposed to England, persuaded the young Prince to accept his brother's offers; the Cardinal Balue, the trusted counsellor of Louis XI., however, worked treacherously to his master in the matter. Balue, a man whom the King had raised from nothing to the Cardinal's hat, had entered into treasonable relations with Charles the Bold, and associated with him was another prelate, Guillaume de Harancourt, Bishop of Verdun.

That Balue suffered from the complaint nowadays termed that of "the swelled head" is evident from a farce which he caused to be played before him when he obtained the envied crimson hat. In this, a personage who represented Balue himself exclaimed: "*Je fais feu, je fais rage, je fais bruit, je fais tout, il n'y a nouvelle que de moi!*"

Soon the only news of the Cardinal was, however, that this Prince of the Church had been imprisoned at Amboise, in one of those iron cages that he had himself either invented or caused to be imported from Italy. Harancourt was similarly confined. The crime of the two churchmen was that of writing to Charles the Bold that, if he only insisted upon the King giving

his brother Champagne and Brie for his appanage, all of the nobility would back him up. Louis XI. had thrown the blame of his own folly in going to Péronne upon Baluc, and had excluded him from his Council upon his return from Liége, and subsequently, a letter from the Cardinal and Harancourt offering to enter the service of the Duc de Bourgogne had been intercepted. The two prelates were to remain imprisoned for eleven and thirteen years respectively ; but while the people, who detested Baluc, were still celebrating his downfall in joyful ballads, the King and his brother met. Lenglet says that the Duc de Guyenne showed himself most grateful, that the two brothers had a most touching interview, during which they threw themselves into each other's arms and wept for joy ! If they did so, they only showed themselves to be a pair of hypocrites, for these two Princes always hated each other, and neither could be relied upon not to take advantage of the other upon the first opportunity.

While for the moment France was thus settling down, in England there was a renewal of disturbances. In July of that year, 1469, Warwick, who was Governor of Calais, brought over with him his daughter, Isabella, and George, Duke of Clarence. He married his daughter to the King's brother in Calais, the marriage causing universal astonishment, as Warwick had already offered this his eldest girl to Edward IV. before he had married Elizabeth Rivers. The marriage was evidently intended as a blow at the King, and Warwick, instead of, as had been expected, siding with the Lancastrians, of whom he had killed so many, plainly proposed to set up the Duke of Clarence against his brother, Edward IV.

Revolts at once broke out in England in all directions, some against the taxes, others out of hatred to the Queen's relatives, of whom Edward made favourites, some in favour of Clarence, some for Henry VI. and Marguerite. Edward soon found himself abandoned, whereupon Warwick's brother, George Nevill, Archbishop of York, arrested him in his bed, and led the King off to his brother in a castle in the north of England.

Among the manuscripts concerning this period preserved in the Bibliothèque royale is one written by Jean de Vaurin, Sire de Forestel. This gentleman, who was a servitor of the Duc de Bourgogne, relates an important event with reference to this seizure of the King, being no less than a threat of Charles the Bold, one almost amounting to a threat of war against England. In a letter to the Lord Mayor and people of London, according to Vaurin, the Duc said that, "upon his going to them and taking the sister of their King in marriage, they had promised him to be and ever to remain the loyal subjects of the King Edward, and that if they did not keep that which they had promised he would know how to treat them." The result of this letter was that the merchants of London all cried out for the return of Edward, whom the Earl of Warwick brought back to them, while pretending that he had never heard anything about the letter from the Duc de Bourgogne. At the same time the Earl said that he had done nothing against the King, but only against his favourites, the Queen's relatives, who took the money of the poor.

In London this immensely wealthy noble was generally popular both with the city officials and the

poor, the cause of his popularity being in a great measure his unbounded hospitality. When in London his doors were always open ; all could enter and dine. He caused six oxen to be served at one meal, and allowed every man to take away as much meat as he could carry on a dagger. Upon his country estates the Earl of Warwick is said to have kept no less than thirty thousand men at his expense. It was perhaps in his rôle of protector of the merchants and of the pirates of the Channel, who brought so much wealth to England, that Richard Nevill found the chief seat of his popularity.

Many of the ships seized by these English corsairs were Dutch or Flemish vessels belonging to Burgundy ; the Duc therefore hated Warwick more even than he hated Louis XI., the friend of Warwick. Some little time after the letter of Charles to the Lord Mayor, when, in 1470, the Earl had made England too hot to hold him, he fled with a large fleet and steered for Calais, which was held by an officer of his own appointment. This officer, however, fired upon the Earl and refused to admit him to the port, warning him at the same time secretly that if he entered he would be besieged by Burgundy and England combined. The Earl then indulged in a little piracy, and, having captured fifteen Burgundian vessels, took them to Rouen, where he sold them.

The anger of Charles the Bold was great against both Louis XI. and the Earl on account of this outrage, and accordingly he sent ships, which blocked Warwick and his fleet in the ports of Normandy, and kept him there for a time, while also doing all the damage that he could to French merchants who had had nothing to

do with the Earl's action. In England, however, the people, more than ever hating the Queen's relatives, were collecting large sums to send to the Kingmaker, to induce him to return, while asking him to join the Lancastrian cause.

The Earl of Warwick was the grandson of Ralph Nevill, Earl of Westmorland and the son of Richard, Earl of Salisbury. He obtained the title of Warwick with his wife, Anne, daughter of that Earl of Warwick who, as Regent of France, burned Joan of Arc at Rouen in 1431. The Regent's mother was Joan, daughter of John of Gaunt, in whom the house of Lancaster took its origin.

The only connection of the Kingmaker with Lancaster was therefore through his wife, and he had hitherto shown himself the cruel and deadly enemy of all connected with the Red Rose. He had led Henry VI. a prisoner to London, while of that King's brave wife, Marguerite d'Anjou, he had caused a libel to be posted on St. Paul's Cathedral. This infamous document called Marguerite a prostitute, and described her young son, Edward Prince of Wales, as the result of an adulterous connection.

With all this, how could any sane person have imagined the possibility of such an event as a reconciliation between Richard Nevill and Marguerite, the daughter of King René? Nevertheless, that wonder came to pass, and the reconciliation became a fact, through the agency of—that King of tricksters—Louis XI. Nor could any reconciliation well have been more complete, since Queen Marguerite married her son to Anne, the second daughter of the Earl of Warwick.

When Louis XI. had completed this horrid and unnatural union, he rubbed his hands with glee, while writing mockingly that "he had married Marguerite and Warwick."

This latter had now one daughter married in the House of York and one in the House of Lancaster, but by neither of these unions was either to become a Queen of England. And yet was Anne fated to occupy the English throne, after her young husband had been basely murdered by Edward IV. on the field of Tewkesbury, as the wife of the horrid hunchback Richard III.

When the alliance between Warwick and Lancaster had thus become *un fait accompli*, snapping his fingers at the Flemish ships by which he was blockaded, and accompanied by some French vessels, the Earl sailed from Normandy, invaded England, and marched on London. While Edward IV. succeeded in escaping to Holland, the Earl took Henry VI. from the Tower and placed him, all crowned, once more upon his throne.

The Chronicler Chastellain says that one might as well have dragged a sack of wool by the ears and dumped it on a throne, and, further, that King Louis seemed to "bathe himself in roses" upon hearing this joyful tidings. Louis was indeed now promising himself great things; he wrote at once and proposed to the imbecile Henry VI. that they should divide the Burgundian dominions between them. Louis XI. would not as yet allow his cousin, Queen Marguerite, to sail for England, for he had found out that she had been writing to Charles the Bold, and therefore mistrusted her. He, however, assembled the notables

of his Kingdom, and, having got them to declare that he was free to break the engagements he had made at Péronne, took his brother with him and invaded Picardy.

Being aided by the unstable Saint-Pol, the King soon took Saint-Quentin and Amiens, while Dammartin took several other towns. In such an age of treachery, it is not surprising if we now find the half-brother of Charles the Bold, the Bastard of Burgundy, coming over to join Louis, as Commynes had done already.

Alarmed at his brother's defection, the Duc wrote two letters; the first, in his own handwriting, was to Louis XI. and, as it was intended to mislead the King, in it he expressed great regret at a war which he said had been forced upon him. The other letter, in almost affectionate terms, warned the merchants of Calais on no account to allow the troops of the successful Warwick to enter that city. The effect of this letter, both in London and Calais, was to prevent the great English merchants from supplying Warwick with the money to send to Calais troops with which he might crush the Duke of Burgundy, and so spoil the English trade with Flanders.

For six months, on one pretence or another, Louis detained Marguerite d'Anjou in France, to the disadvantage of Warwick, who would have been greatly strengthened in England had the daughter of René been but allowed to join him.

At the end of this period Charles the Bold, who had been hesitating as to whether he should openly aid his brother-in-law, supplied Edward with ships and a very large sum of money.

With three hundred Flemings and nine hundred

English soldiers, Edward IV. now sailed from Holland and landed at Ravenspur, at the mouth of the river Humber. Upon thus landing in England in the middle of March 1471, Edward adopted a humble demeanour, giving out that he had not come to recover the throne, but only asked for his father's property, the Duchy of York. He found, however, great difficulty in obtaining admission to the city of York, which was by no means anxious to open its gates to its Liege Lord upon seeing him so poorly attended.

The treachery of Warwick's brother, the Marquis of Montague, who allowed Edward to pass unattacked, now permitted Edward to advance towards London, while his singularly handsome face won him the hearts of all the women, who persuaded their husbands, brothers, and sweethearts to join his cause.

Upon one point Edward felt at ease in his mind during this march. He had sent a lady to his brother Clarence a short time previously when in France. This lady, who, according to Commynes, "was by no means crazy," had so worked upon the feelings of George, Duke of Clarence, as to induce him to promise to leave his father-in-law, Warwick, and join the King. Sure enough, when, in the middle of April 1471, Edward found himself in the presence of Warwick at Barnet, Clarence left his wife's father in the lurch.

In the battle which ensued, although Warwick fought bravely on foot, owing to a mistake by which one portion of his troops attacked their own friends in a fog, Warwick lost the day, and his life also. He lived, however, long enough to learn the treachery of his brother Montague, who assumed the colours of

Edward IV. in the middle of the battle. Montague had, however, been suspected, and no sooner did he show his intention to desert than he was cut down and killed by one of the gentlemen whom Warwick had appointed to watch his brother.

Marguerite d'Anjou had landed in England upon April 14, the very day of the disastrous defeat of Warwick at Barnet. She thought of returning at once to France, but was overruled by those of the Lancastrian party. The unlucky Queen then marched with her army, and took up a strong position on the banks of the rivers Severn and Avon, where they join at Tewkesbury.

Had she only attempted to hold this position, which was much intersected by lanes, ditches, and hedges, Marguerite could easily have beaten off the following force under Edward. The folly of John, Duke of Somerset, however, in charging out and leaving a large open space unprotected by which the enemy could enter her position, lost the day for the unhappy Queen. The victorious forces of Edward IV. captured her camp, and, while she herself was discovered hiding in a wagon, her young son Edward, Prince of Wales, was led after the battle a prisoner into the conqueror's presence. Then, after in the most unknighly manner Edward had struck the young Prince in the face with his iron gauntlet, those around the King—it is said among them his brother Richard—fell upon the son of Henry VI. and stabbed him to death in cold blood.

The battle of Tewkesbury took place on May 4, 1471, and a few days later Henry VI. was found dead in the Tower.

The battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury and the extinction of the House of Lancaster were unlucky events for Louis XI., who seemed to be in danger now from both England and Burgundy in the north, and from the Spanish borders in the south. Here he now had an enemy in Gaston IV. de Foix, whose son had been married to his sister Madeleine de France, but had recently died. Gaston had two daughters, one of whom he had given in marriage to Duc François II. of Brittany, and the other he was now offering to Louis' brother, the Duc de Guyenne. Thus would the old combination of those former friends, François II. and Charles de France, not only be renewed, but strengthened by the Gascons of the south.

The ambition of the Duc de Guyenne, however, prevented this match, for notwithstanding that he had sworn solemnly to Louis that he would never marry Marie, the daughter of Charles the Bold, he was listening to the offers of her hand made to him by the father of that Princess.

These were made by the Duc de Bourgogne simply in the hopes of being able to destroy and dismember France, by the junction of Aquitaine, Burgundy, and the Low Countries. That this was his sole aim was proved clearly by a remark made by the Duc :

"I love the Kingdom so much that, instead of one King in France, I want to see half a dozen there!"

At the same time the King's sister, Yolande, Duchess of Savoy, was stirring up against him his Italian allies in the Duchy of Milan.



MARIE DE BOURGOGNE

CHAPTER XXXII
End of the Great Feudal Coalition
1473

UPON finding that, in spite of his recent oaths of fidelity, his brother was raising an army against him, and placing that old traitor Comte Jean V. d'Armagnac at its head, Louis was for a short time upon the verge of despair.

In order to do all in his power to prevent the alliance of the Duc de Guyenne with Marie de Bourgogne, the King now made an extraordinary offer, proposing to give to his brother Charles his own young daughter in marriage, and at the same time to make him Lieutenant-Général of the Kingdom. Although this position was to carry with it four extra Provinces, the young Prince would consent neither to become Lieutenant-Général nor to marry his nine-year-old niece.

The fact was that the Court of the Duc de Guyenne was torn by divisions, and this weak Prince governed by two persons who hated each other and gave him opposite advice. One of these was Colette de Chambes, his mistress, a bright, clever, and handsome young widow from Poitou, and the other the Seigneur de Lescun. While Colette, who had cause to hate the

King, was pushing Charles de France to the Burgundian marriage, Lescun was constantly advancing the advantages of an alliance with the daughter of Gaston de Foix. Between the two the young Prince had little peace, and in October 1471 he commenced to fall into ill-health. Two months later a priestly friend and follower of Lescun poisoned Colette. This priest was the Abbé de Saint-Jean d'Angely, and, in order to protect himself, and possibly Lescun, from the consequences of his crime, he was supposed to have poisoned the Duc de Guyenne also, when he died in May 1472.

Lescun, however, immediately accused Louis XI. of the poisoning of his brother Charles. At the same time he fled into Brittany, while carrying the Abbé with him, as he said, for trial. Whether Louis caused the poisoning of his brother or no, that he was not incapable of such a crime all believed. At all events, he was greatly delighted upon learning the joyful news of his brother's decease, although he need not have alarmed himself so greatly concerning the prospect of a marriage between Monsieur Charles and Marie de Bourgogne. Charles the Bold was only making use of his daughter's hand as a lure to lead the King's brother on; he had no actual intention of giving her to him, any more than he had to the four or five other Princes, among them the son of Duc Jean de Calabre, to whom he pretended to offer the richest heiress in the world. The Duc de Bourgogne was in the habit of laughingly telling his intimates that his daughter's hand was the best stick that he had to wield, and of saying that he would never marry her until he shaved his own head and became a monk. Commynes remarks, "I do not believe that Charles the Bold ever

would have married Marie so long as he lived." Nevertheless, the mere pretence of giving her to Charles de France had been quite sufficient to disturb his enemy Louis XI. almost to distraction. To increase this distraction, the Duc had invaded France with thirty thousand men, having expected that Saint-Pol would treacherously allow him to reoccupy Amiens, as he had promised to do.

Antoine de Chabannes, however, spoilt this little arrangement by defending the city furiously, and then, upon receipt of the Duc's letter which we have mentioned, Louis and Charles the Bold had concluded a truce. By the terms of this each had tried to deceive the other, Louis promising to deliver up Amiens and Saint-Quentin if the Duc abandoned his alliance with Monsieur Charles and the Breton Duc, while Charles promised to abandon these allies when Louis had placed the two cities in his hands.

Neither had intended to keep his promise, and the death of the Duc de Guyenne relieved Louis of the necessity of troubling himself any more about the matter. He marched at once into Guyenne and took possession of the whole of that portion of France. In revenge for his disappointment, breaking his truce, Charles the Bold now again invaded France, and, in the middle of June 1472 took the town of Nesle, the inhabitants of which had killed the herald whom he had sent to summon them to surrender.

Terrible now was his vengeance! Every one in Nesle was either killed or had a hand severed at the wrist. The Duc himself rode into the church of Notre-Dame, in which the bleeding corpses of men and women were piled high. "By Saint-George!" he

exclaimed—for he always swore by the English Saint—“by Saint-George! my children, you have here made a really fine butchery!” He then besieged Beauvais, to the north of Paris, but the inhabitants, and especially the women, who had heard of the horrors of Nesle, and had no mind to undergo similar experiences, fought so desperately in the breach and the gateway, in which they kindled huge fires, that Chabannes had time to come to its assistance. It was at Beauvais that the young girl, Jeanne Laisné, who has come down to us in popular legend as “Jeanne la Hachette,” axe in hand, took one of the Duc’s standards after killing its bearer. Charles, however, aided by the disobedience of Saint-Pol to the King’s orders, in not destroying several towns in which there were small garrisons, took these towns.

He also marched about the country burning hundreds of castles and villages, and destroying the growing crops everywhere (July to October, 1472).

The Comte de Dammartin meanwhile, by the King’s orders, merely followed the Duc’s army, observing him but not attempting to risk a pitched battle.

At length, after ravaging the whole of the north of France, including the environs of Dieppe, Charles the Bold halted outside Rouen and waited for his ally, François II., to come to help him to take this capital of Normandy. He waited, however, in vain, for Louis was himself pushing the Breton hard, pinning him into his own country and taking several of his places. At length, the better to detach François from Burgundy, the King, although the conqueror, offered the Breton a large sum of money and a truce, offered also to return

the captured towns of Chantocé and Machecoul. The Duc de Bretagne could not refuse such a good offer, whereupon Charles the Bold, thinking that he had done Louis enough injury for the present, and not caring to go on fighting without allies during the winter, also concluded a truce with the King. Leaving garrisons in such towns as he had captured, he now marched off home.

Louis had gained certain advantages, in spite of the damage done to him by Charles the Bold. Among these was the capture of Jean II., Duc d'Alençon, who had attempted to give over his domains to the Duc, and another that the Gascon plotter, the Seigneur de Lescun, like Commines, now came over into his service.

While the Duc d'Alençon was for the second time condemned to death, the sentence of this Prince was commuted to an imprisonment which lasted until 1475, and in the following year this arch-rebel died.

Jean V. d'Armagnac did not get off so easily. When Monsieur Charles died, the Comte, his General-in-Chief in Guyenne, was captured in the town of Lectoure by the Sire de Beaujeu, the brother of the Duc de Bourbon, who became the King's son-in-law. The Comte was taken less than a month after the death of the Duc de Guyenne, his Suzerain Seigneur. By guile and a pretence of wishing to go and make his excuses to the King, d'Armagnac obtained his liberty. No sooner had the bulk of the Royal forces left Aquitaine than the wily Jean V. returned with an army and besieged Pierre de Beaujeu in Lectoure. Being aided by the inhabitants, he recovered that place, and, having made Beaujeu his prisoner, remained in Lectoure as his jailer (October 19, 1472).

The King now sent an army with a powerful artillery to besiege the Comte, and for the third time Lectoure fell in March 1473. The town was now put to all the horrors of a sack, during which Jean V., who had received the promise of his life if he should yield, was poniarded by the orders of the King. All of his vast domains were divided between Pierre de Beaujeu and other Seigneurs, but a few years later we find his second wife, who, it will be remembered, was his sister, petitioning the King for their restitution.

With the assassination of Jean V. d'Armagnac, with the exception of Jacques d'Armagnac, Duc de Nemours, whom a more terrible death awaited, Louis had now finally overcome the great feudal coalitions from which he had been in such constant danger since his accession. The Duc de Bourbon had been content to remain quiet from the time of the battle of Montlhéry. Jean, Duc de Calabre, the son of King René, had died in 1470. The Duc de Bretagne had been paid no longer to assist Charles the Bold, the Duc d'Alençon was in prison, and his political importance ended. Gaston IV. de Foix had just died leaving his grandson François Phébus, a mere child, in the hands of his uncle, Louis XI. Monsieur Charles, whether he died of poison or no, was likewise resting quietly in the security of the tomb.

Of the House of Orléans, the Duc Charles, his brother, the Comte d'Angoulême, and the Great Bastard, Dunois, were dead, the sole representative of the family being a ten-year-old boy, Louis by name, who some thirty years later was to ascend the throne as Louis XII.

Of all the Grands Seigneurs who in the past had

been wont to make themselves troublesome to their Suzerain Seigneur, the King of France, there only remained now the Constable, Louis de Luxembourg. Comte de Saint-Pol, from whom Charles the Bold might possibly expect any assistance in his interference with the Kingdom. But Charles was about to be absorbed with his German schemes, and all the opposition that they would entail, to such an extent as practically to render himself powerless on French territory, whether Saint-Pol helped him or no. The feudal coalition was distinctly ended; the only serious assistance that the Duc could hope for in future must be from England.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The Duc involved by Hagenbach's Horrors

1474—1475

THE arrogance of Charles the Bold was boundless. When Louis XI., in 1470, sent Ambassadors to apologise for the piracies of Warwick, he received them seated on a very high throne, on a golden dais, and under a canopy of gold.

When the King's envoys had been placed on their knees before him, the Duc refused to hear of accepting any reparation, exclaiming angrily: "We Portuguese have this custom, that, when those we believe our friends side with our enemies, we send them to the hundred thousand devils of hell!"

His mother was, as we know, partly Portuguese and partly English, but this assumption of himself as a foreigner greatly offended the Duc's courtiers of various nationalities who were present, at least so says Chastellain, who was the official keeper of his chronicles. Charles the Bold was equally explicit when, finding it hard to get money out of them, he addressed his Flemish subjects at Ypres.

"Fatheads of Flemish!" he exclaimed, "take care! I am half French and half Portuguese. I shall know how to enforce my will. Hard-skulled Flem-

ings! You have always hated your Princes! Well, I prefer to be hated; but I shall know how to settle you. I warn you that I should be sorry for you should you try anything against your Seigneur, for it will be the history of the earthen pot against the iron pot!"

With all his faults, Charles had a great idea of introducing order and regularity. He endeavoured to centralise justice in his realms by establishing a Court of supreme appeal at Malines, after the style of the Parliament of Paris; he attempted to round off his dominions by giving them better frontiers, and, in 1473, the Duc published an edict to ensure regularity in the organisation of all his forces. He established these upon the basis of six men to a lance, insisted upon the captains being able to write, forbade gambling and swearing, and only allowed thirty women to accompany each company of men-at-arms in the field.

This last regulation was, however, openly disobeyed. When the Duc was besieging Neuss, on the Rhine, there were at least fifteen hundred loose women with his troops, while when before Granson several thousand female camp-followers were present with his army.

During the years 1473-5, Charles was occupied with his designs on the Rhine. He seized the Duchy of Gueldre, while from the young René de Vaudemont, a grandson of King René, he seized Lorraine also. He persuaded the Emperor Frederick III. to invest him with the four Bishoprics of Liège, Utrecht, Tournai, and Cambrai, he declared himself the Elector and Protector of Cologne, and defended the Prince-Archbishop of that principality against his discontented subjects.

Promising the Emperor the hand of Marie for his son, the Duke Maximilian of Austria, Charles met Frederick III. at Trèves, where all was prepared for his investiture and coronation as the King of Belgian Gaul, or of the Burgundies. The regalia were all on view in the church of Saint-Maximin, and the ceremony of the Duc's coronation was fixed for the morrow, when, to his discomfiture, the distrustful Emperor played the Duc false. Obtaining a boat, Frederick III. ran away in the night, making his escape down the Moselle.

After dragging young René in his train to Nancy, in Lorraine, Charles next made a state entry into Alsace, of which Province since, having obtained it in pledge from Duke Sigismond, the Duc had appointed a terrible Seigneur as Governor. This was von Hagenbach, a courtier who had risen into favour at the Court of Philippe le Bon in a singular manner. It will be remembered that, when the old Duc became bald, in order to pay court to him many persons shaved their heads. All, however, were not prepared to sacrifice their hair. Von Hagenbach thereupon established himself with a large pair of scissors at the entrance of the Duc's palace. No sooner did any man who did not appear to be bald make his appearance than the zealous courtier caused him to be seized and held until he had personally clipped the wretched individual, who was then allowed to enter.

As Governor in Alsace, Hagenbach pursued the same methods, only now it was the inhabitants of the towns that were shorn by him. A zealous protector of the roads, which before his day had been infested with brigands, he soon restored their safety

by hanging every one that came along just as a precautionary measure! Having extended his hand over the free city of Mulhouse, which owed money to other cities and various Seigneurs, the rascally Hagenbach first starved the place into submission to the Duc his master, and then forcibly proceeded to pay off its debts, at the rate at which the money had been borrowed, in some instances a hundred and fifty years earlier, although money had gone up in value. When the creditors preferred to draw their yearly interest as a good investment, Hagenbach drew the sword upon them, and forced them to receive their money at its point. In this way Hagenbach became involved with the rich Swiss city of Bâle, which he forced to accept the sum of twenty thousand florins, in spite of all protests.

Making the Seigneurs pay for the privilege of hunting, and the poor contribute heavy taxes on their food, wine, and beer, this unjust steward of Charles the Bold did not hesitate to cut off a number of heads in a small town named Thann, where he found the people recalcitrant.

Not stopping at this, Hagenbach invaded the Swiss Canton of Berne, and annexed a portion of its territories in the name of the Duc de Bourgogne.

Now it was that Charles the Bold became involved with the Swiss, of which fact the wily Louis would take advantage ere long by inducing the mountaineers to fight his battles for him. When the Swiss complained to the Duc de Bourgogne, he haughtily replied:

"I do not care whether or no my Governor

makes himself agreable to my neighbours; the essential is that he should please me !”

In short, the Duc backed up Hagenbach in all his enormities. When, with a thousand Walloon soldiers, he pillaged the inhabitants and violated the women of the inoffensive town of Brisach, Charles merely remarked :

“ All the better ! they merited it. Hagenbach has done well ! ”

The crime of Brisach, in the Duc's eyes, was simply that the inhabitants spoke German, and, since the Emperor had made a fool of him in the matter of the coronation at Trèves, he hated everything German.

The triumphant Hagenbach now exclaimed, “ I am Pope, I am Bishop, I am Emperor and King ! ”

In his jubilation he proceeded to get married, in the same town of Thann where he had cut off the heads of the town councillors. In order the more merrily to celebrate his nuptials, Hagenbach inaugurated a series of indecent fêtes. In one of these, while the married women of Thann were stripped naked with their heads covered, the game consisted in the husbands endeavouring to recognise their own wives !

Not for long did Hagenbach remain a faithful husband, for soon after his wedding we find him pursuing a beautiful young nun with his unwelcome attentions. It was in vain that the girl's relations hid her for a time, for the dreadful Hagenbach sent round the town-crier to proclaim the pain of death against all those who knew where the nun was and did not

immediately deliver her up to him. He carried on his love-affairs even in the churches, upon one occasion forcing a priest to leave to him an altar upon which he was sitting toying and laughing with one of his lady-loves. When the priest commenced to celebrate Mass at another altar, Hagenbach selected the moment of the elevation of the Host to kiss the lady!

Naturally the time would arrive when such a scoundrel would come to a bad end. This came when the Duc Sigismond, having made up his old differences with the Swiss, had arrived in Bâle, and, with the money in hand, demanded back from Charles the Bold the Alsatian territories which he had mortgaged but not sold to him.

While Hagenbach was driving the people of Brisach to the defences, they suddenly seized upon their Governor, who was deserted by the troops whom he had neglected to pay. All of the towns of the district, Swiss as well as Alsatian, sent judges to participate in his trial. Hagenbach was fearfully tortured and then decapitated. He, however, stood the torture with the greatest fortitude, and made a most exemplary and Christian end.

Charles the Bold took a terrible revenge upon Alsace for the death of his favourite, and shortly afterwards he proceeded to besiege the town of Neuss, on the Rhine, which had revolted from Robert of Bavaria, the Archbishop of Cologne, whose protector he had declared himself.

At this period Charles obtained a definite promise from his English brother-in-law to invade France. By the treaty then made (July 1474), the Duc made over

nearly the whole of France to Edward IV., merely retaining for himself the cities on the Somme and the County of Champagne.

Meanwhile the King whose dominions were being so freely disposed of behind his back was not wasting his time and opportunities.

Nicolas, the infant son of Jean, Duc de Calabre, had died in the previous year, leaving young René, the son of Frédéric, Comte de Vaudemont, and Yolande, the daughter of King René, as heir to Lorraine. It seemed a matter of doubt as to whether he or his cousin Charles II., Comte du Maine, was the heir to Anjou, although King René had declared his nephew Charles to be the heir to Provence. Pretending that King René had disinherited his nephew, the son of the Comte de Vaudemont, Louis settled the matter by quietly walking into Anjou and annexing it to the Crown.

At the same time Louis stirred up the already angry Swiss, paid them highly, and induced them to enter the Duc's territory of Franche-Comté, while the Duc himself was besieging Neuss, on the Rhine. The result of this Swiss invasion was that, in a bloody battle at Héricourt, in November 1474, Charles's scanty troops were seriously defeated.

While Louis laughed at his bloodless success over his rival, the Duc could only gnash his teeth with rage and go on more obstinately than ever with his siege of Neuss. For a whole year he was detained before Neuss with an enormous army, among which were two thousand English and a quantity of Lombards from Italy. These latter were under the command of Jacques de Savoie, Comte de Romont,

and other Italian mercenaries were under a scoundrelly Neapolitan captain, the Count of Campobasso. Charles the Bold was, however, never to be fated to take Neuss, for a number of the German Electoral Princes, in the Emperor's name, concluded a league with Louis XI., who falsely promised to give them thirty thousand men, and advanced against the Duc and the Archbishop of Cologne.

The Emperor himself, although secretly in favour of Charles, whose daughter he still wanted for his needy son, was forced to join, or to pretend to join, the coalition which was to prevent the Duc from becoming supreme in Germany, even from succeeding to the Holy Roman Empire. He had already asked Frederick III. to appoint him King of the Romans, the title assumed by the heirs to the Empire. The large army of the Princes, under a noted warrior, the gallant old Margrave of Brandenburg, advanced against Charles the Bold very cautiously, and there was only one severe conflict before Neuss, which resulted in a drawn battle.

At this moment Charles received more bad news. His Duchy of Luxembourg had been invaded by Germans, Louis XI. had retaken Perpignan from the King of Aragon, and, freed from the Spaniards, was now marching into Picardy.

To make matters worse, young René of Lorraine, who had hitherto been content to accept the position of the Duc's tame cat, was now openly defying him and joining the Swiss. The only ray of hope for Charles the Bold was to get rid of his German foes, to leave the siege of Neuss, where the inhabitants were, however, at the last gasp from starvation, to join the

English who were landing at Calais, and with them march on Paris.

He was given his opportunity of getting away from Neuss in an honourable manner by the cunning of the Margrave of Brandenburg. This Prince suggested that the settlement of the dispute between the Archbishop of Cologne and his subjects should be left to the decision of the Papal Legate, whom he had summoned to his camp. This proposal the Duc accepted. The Emperor now made a separate treaty with Charles, one merely upon his own account as ruler of the Empire, whose feudal rights Charles had recently so frequently interfered with. In his treaty Frederick III. included neither the Rhine cities nor Duke Sigismond of Austria, nor the Swiss. Such was his anxiety to procure the hand of Marie for Maximilian, that Frederick agreed to withdraw the whole of the Imperial troops, if only Charles would agree to withdraw his army from before Neuss at the same time. He also offered to break his alliance with Louis XI. This offer was agreed to by Charles the Bold, when his army and that of the Emperor and the German Princes drew off from Neuss in opposite directions (June 26, 1475, and June 27, 1475). With that of the Emperor, there were ten Princes, fifteen Dukes and Margraves, six hundred and twenty-five Knights, and the troops of no less than sixty-eight Imperial cities. All of these, according to the Bishop of Lisieux, who was furious at their having disturbed his master, Charles the Bold, were "nothing but a pack of rustics, do-nothings, gluttons, adulterers, and haunters of the alehouse!"

Whatever their personal character may have been,

these German troops were the cause of the first real blow to the prestige of Charles the Bold. It was, moreover, a fearful disappointment to that Prince to have wasted a year before Neuss, without having been able to punish its saucy inhabitants in the end after the fashion in which he had treated those of Nesle.

CHAPTER XXXIV

The Rewards of Treachery

1475—1477

THE descent of Edward IV. in France in 1475 did not prove so satisfactory to Charles the Bold as he had hoped. While the English King, after landing at Calais at the beginning of July, was for a few days enjoying the society of his sister, the Duchesse de Bourgogne, all that her husband wished was to get his brother-in-law farther away from the Flemish frontiers, and on towards Paris. The English, on the other hand, hoped to be entertained for as long as possible at the Duc's expense and in his French cities. Further, they had expected and hoped that Charles would have opened up the road for them by waging war on Louis before they arrived. He had indeed promised to do so. By the Comte de Saint-Pol, who was anxious to have the English in France as a set-off against both Louis and Charles, by whom he knew himself hated, Edward had been promised that he would open the gates of Saint-Quentin. In this respect, as usual, Saint-Pol lied. Nor had the English kept their word, for they had promised Charles to invade by way of Normandy. Thus of the three personages principally concerned in the invasion, none told the other the

truth. Saint-Pol, instead of opening the gates to Edward upon his arrival before Saint-Quentin, fired his cannon at him and killed several of his men, nor did the Duc de Bretagne keep his promises made to the King of England.

Louis XI. was not, however, strong. Being disappointed in having lost his former alliance with Scotland, and finding that neither the Duc de Bourbon, who was ill, nor the Duc de Nemours, who was a traitor, joined him, he avoided a battle.

The Burgundians, however, like the English, fell into a trap owing to the double action of Saint-Pol. He told them that the Duc de Bourbon was favourable to their cause, and when they accordingly confidently sent a force to meet him, it was cut to pieces, although not by Bourbon in person.

Louis XI. meanwhile, instead of fighting, made a desert waste of the country before the English King, with the result that a dozen or so of rich London merchants who had aided him with money and were present with his force soon became sick of a war in which nothing could be accomplished. Edward himself, who had fought in many battles, but who loved his ease, fair ladies, and good living, was also soon wearied of his purposeless campaign. He was not therefore disinclined to listen to the fairy tales, respecting a marriage between the five-year-old Dauphin, Charles, and one of his daughters, with which Louis soon entertained his ears.

To make these more acceptable, they were interwoven with the delicate hint that the revenues of the Duchy of Guyenne would be at the disposal of the English Princess.

The manner in which, without fighting, Louis now seduced the allies of Charles the Bold was admirable. The English had advanced to the neighbourhood of the city of Amiens, which, while so greatly desired by the Duc, was strongly held by the French. Louis now said that he would be glad to entertain daily at his expense a number of the English soldiers, who were suffering from hunger and thirst. The streets of Amiens became thenceforward daily full of well-fed Englishmen, who, while rolling home after being plentifully supplied with wine, vowed that the King of France and his subjects were jolly good fellows, altogether different to that beggarly Charles of Burgundy, who had kept the gates of his cities closed as they passed.

While Charles happened to be away from his brother-in-law, on a money-collecting expedition in Hainaut, Louis clinched the business with Edward IV. "Come," he wrote, "and meet me for a chat on the Somme bridge at Picquigny. I have seventy-five thousand crowns in cash for you, and you shall have at least fifty thousand more for the release of Marguerite d'Anjou if you will only kindly pack up and go home. Is it a bargain? will you come?" "Done!" replied Edward; and the two Kings met and embraced each other cautiously through a trellis-work in the centre of the bridge. After the embraces, Louis met the suggestions of the English King in a generous spirit, increasing his offers to an annual pension of fifty thousand crowns a year, in addition to the sums above mentioned.

When Charles the Bold returned a day or two later, he found that he had lost his ally. Edward had

been very thoroughly bought by the astute Louis XI., and the Peace of Picquigny was signed (August 29, 1475).

As Louis had not forgotten to promise pensions to the Lord Chancellor and other English lords of influence, he was not likely now to have any more trouble from the late allies of Burgundy.

The marriage of the Dauphin to a daughter of England was stipulated for in the truce for seven years agreed upon, while Edward practically sold his future alliance to France, the two Kings vowing "perfect amity" to each other, and also to protect each other against "rebel subjects."

Charles the Bold had some very hard things to say to his brother-in-law, and he did not neglect to express himself very forcibly, and in English, so that all who stood by might hear and understand. He told Edward plainly that the English of former days had been wont to conduct themselves in a more honourable manner, but, as for himself, he had no more use for them and could do without them.

Edward tried hard to soothe Charles down by his generous hospitality, but his efforts proved of but little avail, while many of the English agreed with the Duc de Bourgogne that he had been treated in a shabby and dishonourable manner. They were, in fact, ashamed of themselves and their King.

A fortnight later, while the English army was re-embarking for its own shores, Charles himself concluded a truce with Louis for nine years, at Soulevres, in Luxembourg. By this the King renounced his allies the Swiss, young René, and Duke Sigismond of Austria; in fact, he behaved in quite as dishonourable

a way to his allies as Edward had done to Charles the Bold.

Louis felt, however, that he could easily pick up these allies again when he wanted them, and for the moment he wished to lull his Burgundian rival to rest, as he had a little business on hand at home in which he wished to be aided not thwarted. This business was the crushing of the last two of his feudal traitors, the Comte de Saint-Pol and Jacques d'Armagnac, Duc de Nemours.

These for the last fifteen years had done nothing but embroil France, play the rebel, cause wars, introduce the English, the Breton, or the Burgundian, while selling themselves in turn first to one side and then to the other.

They were allied by marriage, and, fearing that their time was coming, had for some time past been writing to one another to be on their guard against the King.

Louis, however, while waiting patiently for his opportunity, had been endeavouring to lull the suspicions of each by plausible letters commencing, "My good Cousin," or "My Brother." The possessions of Nemours were immense and all over France, and he owed them all to the King's liberality. While Louis de Luxembourg was also the proprietor of vast domains he did not owe these so directly to the King, although he had been liberally treated on many occasions, to say nothing of his appointment as Constable of France. The only excuse which he could offer for his conduct was that he was at once the great vassal of the two Princes opposed to one another, and by feudal laws bound to render service to each. This

might have held had he been faithful to one or the other, but the Comte de Saint-Pol had shown as little fidelity to his Suzerain Seigneur the Duke of Burgundy as to his Suzerain Seigneur the King of France.

Nemesis was now to descend upon the head of Saint-Pol at last, for at the time of the Peace of Picquigny the Kings of France and England and Charles the Bold had made a mutual exchange of his letters. In those most recently written to Louis, the Constable had hypocritically suggested fobbing off the English by giving them "two or three rubbishy little towns to lodge in for the winter"; but his real intention had been to give them the two fairly strong places of Eu and Saint-Valery, where he would be himself able to aid them in the spring. In this matter Louis disappointed Saint-Pol, by causing Eu and Saint-Valery to be burned to the ground.

Nothing daunted at not being able to establish the English in France, the good Constable had next proposed that the King, he, and the Duc de Bourgogne should all combine, fall upon the English together, and wipe them out entirely. There was no end to the treacheries of Saint-Pol! For that matter, it was the age of treachery among Princes and relatives. Saint-Pol, it will be remembered, was the uncle of the English Queen; but Edward IV. was no better. At the time of Picquigny he made a secret offer to Louis, saying that, if he would pay the expenses, he would return to France in the following year and help him to crush his brother-in-law. Louis had, however, preferred to pay to keep Edward and his army out of France.

No sooner had Louis XI. got Charles the Bold safely out of the country, in Lorraine, than he marched

off rapidly himself with a large number of men-at-arms to arrest the Constable at Saint-Quentin. The bird had, however, flown to the territory of the Duc—the Comte was already at the fortified town of Mons, in Hainaut, Charles having given him a safe-conduct. Louis at once wrote to Charles and offered him the greater part of Saint-Pol's possessions if he would send him the traitor. The Duc replied agreeing to this, but did not give him up, and merely kept Louis de Luxembourg under observation at Mons.

The Comte's son was doing good service for the Duc, and had interceded for his father; moreover, Charles liked to retain this arch-rebel as a possible card in his hand against Louis in future. Meanwhile, he was engaged with his army in besieging Nancy, in Lorraine, where he had already obtained several important successes. Could the Duc but take Nancy, he would be able to snap his fingers at the King, whom, although he loathed Saint-Pol, he was not particularly anxious to oblige. The siege, however, dragged on and Louis advanced troops to Champagne, to the borders of Lorraine, where he threatened to interfere if Saint-Pol were not delivered to him—when Charles again promised to send him the prisoner. Two enemies of Saint-Pol, Humbercourt and Hugonet, gave up the traitor, however, to the King, contrary to the Duc's orders, before the date fixed upon, and a day or two later Nancy fell, setting the army of Charles at liberty (November 30th, 1475), when the Duc de Bourgogne formally annexed the Duchy of Lorraine to his dominions.

To the great regret of Louis XI., those appointed to conduct the trial of Saint-Pol did not send him to

the torture. The reason for this was that he knew too many secrets, and all feared that, should he speak, he would incriminate them. They hurried up the trial, and the traitorous head of the Constable, Louis de Luxembourg, was chopped off, in the Place de Grève in Paris, a few days after his arrival as a prisoner at that city.

Saint-Pol was done for at last ! but the King had not yet got the Duc de Nemours. Jacques d'Armagnac had indeed wisely shut himself up in one of his strong places—Carlat, in Gascony—and an army was required to besiege him. Carlat, however, fell in March, 1476, when the wretched Nemours was taken prisoner, after having made a good fight for his life. His unhappy wife died of horror as Jacques d'Armagnac was led away. Horrible was now his punishment. After being shut up for a year and four months in a small iron cage in the Bastille, the miserable Jacques was cruelly tortured and then beheaded (August 1477). The King's favourites, notably Pierre de Beaujeu, profited greatly at his death, as the estates of Nemours were divided among them. One of these, the Italian Boffalo del Giudice, was likewise entrusted by the King with the eldest son of the victim, whom he made away with.

Although he had been disappointed in the matter of the non-torturing of Saint-Pol, Louis had invented a plan whereby he could ensure the death and preliminary torture of any one whom he particularly wished to punish severely. This course, which he adopted in the case of the Duc de Nemours, was to have the prisoner tried, not by the Parliament, but by a Commission appointed by himself. To these judges the King

promised in advance the possessions of the culprit whom he might put into their hands for trial ! This arrangement worked like a charm ! All of the Princes and great nobles from whom he had anything to fear being now dead, it might have been supposed that the suspicious nature of Louis XI. would have allowed him to rest for a time, while giving repose to others. Such, however, was not the case ; upon the slightest excuse he would imprison a man or deprive him of his estates, and the son of the Duc d'Alençon, the Comte du Perche, who had been brought up by the King, was now denounced on a foolish charge.

The Duc de Bourbon and old King René were also yet alive, and the King had heard reports against both of them. The former Prince he now felt able to insult with impunity ; therefore, after in the most insulting manner sending one of his own unfaithful vassals, named Doyat, to make inquiries into his conduct in his own territory, the King punished Bourbon in an arbitrary manner. By the direct and explicit command of Louis XI., Bourbon was now ordered to make over the Barony of Beaujolais to his brother, Pierre de Beaujeu.

King René had married a second time, having made a love-match with a young lady whom he had seen and greatly admired in her childhood. She was the daughter of Gui de Laval, a high Breton noble, and René had first seen her at a splendid tournament which he had himself given. The girl, then aged thirteen, had, while dressed as Joan of Arc, distributed the prizes, kissed the winners, and possibly also the giver of the tourney. René had never forgotten the pretty maiden, and when his wife Isabelle had been

dead some time he sent for Jeanne de Laval, who was twenty-seven years his junior, and made her his Queen. With her and her young sister he now led an Arcadian existence at his various country places in Anjou or Provence, with them devoting himself to the delights of angling, gardening, versifying about shepherds and shepherdesses, and painting. A good musician, René dressed himself up as a Canon, and, seated in a Gothic throne which he had himself designed, delighted to lead the choir in church. While his son, the gallant Jean de Calabre, ran about the world in search of Kingdoms, "the good King René," as his people called him, dwelt thus free from ambition or the cares of the world. It was, however, impossible for him to keep entirely clear of the plots and plans of others. Some would have set him up as the rival of his nephew Louis XI., and placed him on the throne. Further, when his son Jean de Calabre's death in 1470 had been followed by that of his infant grandson, Nicolas, in 1473, Charles the Bold worried him to make over to him his succession to Provence. This René had been inclined to do, but Louis, hearing of this scheme and furious with covetousness, punished René. He seized upon Anjou in France, and the Duchy of Bar also, although it lay outside the French domains. He even went so far as to say that his uncle must be arrested, and to make preparations as though to have him seized and torn from his rural retreat.

René was for the moment justly alarmed, but, having succeeded in quieting the King's anger by vowing to have no more to do with Charles the Bold, he accepted with resignation the loss of Anjou.

If René were content, his nephew the King was

not, and now bullied his uncle into yielding up to him, in return for a yearly pension, the succession to the great County of Provence, after the death of René and his nephew Comte Charles II. du Maine.

Although Provence was a fief of the Empire, and one which might have descended through the female line of King René's sister, Yolande, to her son René II. (de Vaudemont), the head of the House of Anjou and titular King of Sicily made no great fuss when thus making over Provence to France. On the contrary, he took a delight in beautifully illuminating and adorning with miniatures the document in which he promised the great County to Louis XI. René made, however, of all of his misfortunes the opportunity of indulging in his artistic tastes. When, many years earlier, he had been detained in prison by Philippe le Bon for want of the money to pay his ransom, he occupied his time by painting a beautiful altarpiece, with which he presented his captor in order to adorn a chapel.

There is, however, a certain pathos in connection with a whimsical picture which the good King René painted after he had finished his work on his deed of renunciation. This represented the ancient and gnarled bole of a tree, in the rugged bark of which his own features could be distinguished. From this tree-trunk but one feeble off-shoot sprang, evidently meant to represent his nephew René de Vaudemont, who had suffered so greatly at the hands of Charles the Bold in Lorraine.

As King René died in the year 1480, and his nephew Charles II. du Maine died also, childless, in 1481, the threats and bullyings of Louis had not been in vain. His greed was satisfied by the succession of

Provence before he himself in turn "shuffled off this mortal coil."

René may be said, on the whole, to have escaped from his nephew's clutches well during the vicissitudes of his long career; the Comte du Perche, however, whom we have mentioned above, was not so lucky. This young Prince had been brought up by Louis XI. to be a traitor to his father, the Duc d'Alençon, and the Duc de Bretagne, but to the King he had been ever faithful. His sole fault seems to have been that of an undue partiality for the fair sex, added to which was an excess of credulity. Taking advantage of this, persons about the Court, who wished to annex his considerable possessions, wrote to Perche anonymously to say that the King intended to make of him a monk, or hang him. His own illegitimate sister was in the plot, and, after having frightened her brother into saying that he would fly to Brittany, informed the King. Louis thereupon caused the wretched youth to be imprisoned in a cage only one pace and a half in width, through the bars of which he had to be fed with a fork! In this the Comte du Perche was kept for a whole winter, and he would eventually have been put to death, owing to a plot of the Sire de Lude and the Sire de Saint-Pierre to obtain his inheritance, when, fortunately for him, de Lude died suddenly. Du Perche was then released, with the bones of his shoulder, his thigh, and his skull in an almost rotten condition.

CHAPTER XXXV

Defeats and Death of Charles the Bold

1476—1477

WHILE Louis, the man of ruse, was, by the employment of money wrung from his subjects, gradually succeeding in his cherished schemes, affairs were, mainly owing to the King's devices, shaping badly for Charles, the man of action.

After the Duc had entered Nancy in state, and declared himself the Lord of Lorraine, at the end of the year 1475, all that it would have been necessary for him to do in order to obtain repose was to make peace with the Swiss.

The Confederates, however, wished to force Charles to abandon Alsace, nor, owing to the instigations of France, would the Swiss agree to any reasonable terms. To punish the Swiss he made, therefore, an alliance with Yolande, Duchess of Savoy, the sister of Louis XI. With this Princess, who now ruled the Duchy in the name of her infant son Philibert, Charles had always been on friendly terms. Her brother, indeed, always sneeringly said that Yolande was more Burgundian than French, while calling her "*Madame la Bourguignonne*."

The Bernese Swiss had invaded and seized the

Pays de Vaud, which, now a Canton of Switzerland, then belonged to Savoy. To punish the Swiss, Charles marched south with twenty thousand men. With him was Jacques de Savoie, Comte de Romont, who was also Baron de Vaud. Another Seigneur in the Duc's army was Rodolphe, Comte de Neufchâtel. Both of these nobles had had their French-speaking territories invaded by the German-Swiss, and both had held the rank of Maréchal de Bourgogne, still enjoyed by the latter.

These Swiss gentlemen in the Burgundian army were in great measure the cause of the brutality of Charles, when, after a stubborn resistance, he captured the town of Granson, on the southern shores of the Lake of Neufchâtel. Wishing to be able in future to live on good terms with their neighbours, they had sent some girls of bad character with a man into Granson, to promise their lives to the garrison, which might otherwise have continued longer its gallant resistance. When the town fell Charles, furious at the loss of life among his men in the repeated assaults, disavowed these messengers, and allowed his soldiers, many of them French-speaking Swiss and Savoyards, to wreak their will. Most of the Swiss of the garrison were by them hanged or drowned in the lake (February 23, 1476).

The confederated army, which was at Neufchâtel, near at hand, was furious, and the men of the Canton of Berne were at once joined by those of the Cantons of Schwitz, Soleure, and Fribourg. Having advanced against the Duc outside Granson, they placed the butts of their eighteen-foot-long lances in the ground and waited for the Burgundian attack. Finding that

his artillery was badly served, the Duc sent his men-at-arms to charge the Swiss. These mounted gendarmerie had, however, lances only ten feet long, and could make no impression on the foe. While Charles the Bold now bravely headed his infantry and charged the Swiss in front, he sent a gallant officer named Châteauguyon to attack the mass of Swiss on the flank with his horsemen. There was a prolonged and furious combat, and Châteauguyon was killed just as he was seizing the standard of the enemy. At this critical moment the Alpine horns of Unterwalden and Uri were heard sounding furiously in the mountains behind the Burgundians, and the men of those Cantons, accompanied by the men of Lucerne, charged down, while crying savagely, "Granson! Granson!"

Alarmed by the appearance of this new army, the Burgundians would stand no longer. Despite the prayers, curses, and menaces of Charles the Bold, even although he struck down his faltering soldiers with his sword, they broke and fled, while, according to the accounts of the day, the men of the League fell upon them like hail.

In the rout the Duc was carried away by his panic-stricken men, of whom he, however, according to even the enemy's computation, did not lose more than a thousand, while the Swiss losses had also been severe. The bold Duc had, nevertheless, suffered severely, his prestige being terribly lowered by this defeat. It was the first time, moreover, in which he had ever been known to turn his back upon an enemy. His camp had been taken, and with it his remarkable diamonds, known throughout all Europe by reputation.



MAXIMILIAN I., EMPEROR OF GERMANY, HUSBAND OF MARIE DE
BOURGOGNE, ARMED FOR A TOURNAMENT

His Seal of State and his Collar of the Golden Fleece, even his Ducal hat, had fallen into the hands of the Swiss (March 2, 1476).

The shame which the Duc de Bourgogne must feel was known and rejoiced in by all his enemies, of whom the greatest was Louis XI. The King had repaired to Lyon, so as to be near the seat of war, and learn the news of his rival's movements at the earliest possible date. When he received the intelligence of the defeat and flight of Charles, in his jubilation, Louis indulged in an unusual debauch, taking two mistresses at once from among the Lyonnaises. These two women, who were known as *la Gigonne* and *la Passe-Fillon*, he took away with him to Orléans, the former being the widow and the other the wife of a rich merchant of Lyon. According to the peculiar ethics of the day, the husband of *la Passe-Fillon* considered himself honoured by the King's fancy for his spouse, and was still more so when Louis rewarded him for his complaisance by providing him with a high office in the *Chambre des Comptes* at Paris. As for *la Gigonne*, the King distinguished the young widow by marrying her honourably to a young gentleman.

Louis' sister Yolande was, meanwhile, playing the part of ministering angel to Charles the Bold at Lausanne, whither he had retreated with his army. While she endeavoured to soothe his rage and grief, the Duchess of Savoy made him new silken clothing, his own garments being in rags; she also provided his troops with new clothing and equipments of all kinds.

With Yolande by his side to aid and console him, Charles soon regained heart, and before long he had

reinforced his army with three thousand English, four thousand Italians, six thousand Walloons, and six thousand cavalry from Flanders. The army of Savoy, under the Comte de Romont, was also largely recruited, receiving thirteen thousand new men.

Feeling himself a man again, after sending to defy Louis XI.—of whose manœuvres he was well aware—at the end of May 1476 Charles marched off with the purpose of punishing the Bernese in their own Canton. Louis, following his usual tactics, was remitting to the Swiss large sums of money to go on fighting his battles for him. He promised men also, but, seeing that he sent none, the Bernese made frantic efforts to raise troops. In every family where there were two sons, both were taken—one for the army, which was to take the field, the other for the town of Morat, which it was rightly expected that Charles would commence by attacking.

The army with which the Duc de Bourgogne now took the field once more was ill-disciplined. He had begged the Emperor to send him trained troops and, to induce him to do so, had taken a solemn oath before the Papal Legate, on May 6th, 1476, that he would give his daughter Marie to the young Duke Maximilian. The Emperor had promised, but, being as he was a man utterly devoid of honour, Frederick III. sent not a single man.

Men from the Empire, from Alsace, arrived on the other hand to help the Swiss; the young Duke René of Lorraine heading the red and white coated men of Strasburg, the red and blue of Colmar, the black of Waldshut, and the white and green of Lindau.

The town of Morat was situated upon the lake

of that name, and, in spite of repeated assaults made upon its walls, the garrison kept up its courage. At length, upon June 22, the men of Berne, having been further reinforced by all those of Zurich, advanced to the attack. The Duc, in his obstinacy to take Morat, now made a mistake, leaving about ten thousand Savoyards, under the Comte de Romont, to watch one side of the town while he remained with the rest of his force on the other. The Swiss, about thirty-four thousand strong, came down upon Charles the Bold with his vastly inferior force. There had been heavy rain, his bow-strings were slackened, and his powder damp. Again, also, his artillery was badly served. Although at first his mounted troops gained some success, the Swiss, with their immense superiority of numbers and their terribly long pikes, forced the Burgundians before them by sheer weight. The English were all killed, the cavalry were driven into the muddy ground near the lake, the Burgundians, Walloons, and Flemings forced into the lake itself. "Kill! kill! kill!" yelled the Swiss, and they drove their long spears through and through the masses, who, floundering on the shores or in the water, could not even reach their ferocious enemy in return.

In the middle of the conflict, disregarding the ten thousand men under Jacques de Savoie watching at one gate of the town, the famous Swiss leader Buben-berg, usually the friend of Burgundy, issued from another gate of Morat, and fell upon a large body which was standing firm under the Bastard of Burgundy. Upon three sides the army of the Duc was now hemmed in by the mountaineers. There was no room to move—no escape! Ten thousand men were

killed upon the shore of the lake of Morat or drowned in its waters. And still the slaughter went on, until the lake resembled a sea of blood.

The army of Burgundy was done for, cut to pieces, although Charles the Bold cut his way through the enemy and escaped to a place called Morgues, thirty miles from the scene of his awful defeat. The thousands of dead were left rotting on the borders of the Lake of Morat, or in its waters, which continued to cast up the bones of the slain until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Lord Byron, the celebrated poet, is said to have collected some of these bones, and to have preserved them as a memento of the massacre of the Burgundians, which took place on June 22nd, 1476.

For a second time the Duc had recourse to Yolande for assistance, and she willingly joined him at Gex with her children. Her Savoyard nobles had re-occupied their territories in the Pays de Vaud, for their troops had been unharmed at the battle of Morat. Nor was there any chance of the Swiss being again able to dispossess them. There was therefore no reason why the Duchess of Savoy should accede to the unwarranted demand that Charles now made upon her to accompany him to Franche-Comté. She did not like to disoblige the Duc, but gracefully made her excuses, whereupon he was guilty of a most unchivalrous action, quite unworthy of the head of the noble Order of the Golden Fleece.

As she was leaving Gex with her children, Charles sent his servitor, Olivier de la Marche, to arrest Yolande. She was taken, but her young son, the Duc Philibert, was carried off in safety.

From the people of Franche-Comté the Duc could now raise only three thousand men, and even these they would only give to defend their own borders. The Burgundians and Flemings would do no more for him, while the latter answered insolently, and even refused to send to Charles his daughter Mademoiselle de Bourgogne, whom they retained in Ghent. Meanwhile, in Lorraine, young René had retaken the important city of Lunéville from the Burgundians, the Neapolitan Count Campo-Basso, who had been instructed to defend Lorraine, proving incompetent or unwilling to do his duty.

This Campo-Basso, to whom Charles had given large estates, was in fact a traitor of the vilest description, one who had on several occasions offered to Louis XI. to kill the Duc or imprison him. Louis, mistrusting the Neapolitan, is said even to have warned the Duc against the man, but was not believed. It would seem probable that the King imagined that the Italian was merely laying a trap for him, otherwise it was unlike him to have refused his offers or to have been so generous as to have communicated them to his rival.

In August of that year 1476 Louis was still, at any rate, working in his usual underhanded manner against Charles the Bold. He carried off his sister Yolande from her Castle of Rouvre in which Charles had left her, and advised the Swiss to invade Burgundy, while giving them, by the Treaty of Fribourg, twenty-four thousand florins. He signed an alliance with young René, and provided him with forty thousand florins wherewith to hire Swiss mercenaries to add to the twelve thousand men whom he had already assembled.

As for himself, Louis declared to all the Confederates that he would invade Flanders, although he did not, in fact, move a man.

Upon October 7th, 1476, Campo-Basso allowed René, with the Alsatians, from Strasburg, to take Nancy, then the capital of Lorraine. This loss Charles the Bold felt to be a terrible blow, as he had planned to make of Nancy the central capital of the Kingdom which, whether he were actually crowned by the Emperor or no, he intended to form.

Never did the courage of this stubborn Prince rise higher than at this time, when he felt himself to be in such difficulties. He had been ill, but he disregarded all bodily aches and pains; he had but few men, scarcely ten thousand, wherewith to meet all of the foes which the malice of Louis XI. had raised up against him. These were considerably more than double the troops at his own command.

"No matter!" exclaimed Charles furiously, "if I had to fight against them alone, still would I fight them all!" With the men at his disposal he marched off to lay siege to Nancy, before whose walls he arrived October 22, 1476.

René, the recent conqueror of the capital of his Duchy, had not, however, been able to assemble the men promised by the German Swiss. When matters were beginning to look shaky in Nancy, which had not been reprovisioned, he slipped out, and, followed by his tame bear which followed him everywhere like a dog, proceeded to Berne. The emblem of that Canton is the Bear, and bears have from time immemorial been kept alive in the pits in the city, being considered almost in the light of something sacred.

When young René arrived therefore with his bear, as it were to make a morning call upon its fellow Bruins, he was received with enthusiasm. When he went to the Council Chamber, the bear was soon at home, and, preceding his master, would scratch at the door, which was opened to him.

René obtained his German-Swiss—thousands of them flocked to his standard. Unfortunately, they all arrived in a state of drunkenness, accompanied moreover by girls whose morals were as light as their hearts. As the drunkenness continued, while the young Duke of Lorraine was escorting these mercenaries for their winter march to Nancy, a large

umber of the Swiss, with their gay female companions, managed to drown themselves in the Rhine. Those who survived unreasonably declared that it was all René's fault, when he was obliged to hide from their drunken fury, while they loudly cursed him and all his race.

The winter was terrible, the cold being arctic in severity, and, while René was struggling along with his relieving force, the Burgundian troops were freezing before Nancy. No less than four hundred of the Duc's men were frozen to death on the night of Christmas 1476, while many more lost hands and feet!

The city was about to fall into the hands of Charles, the besieged inhabitants having eaten all the dogs and cats and all the rats and mice that they could catch, when the Duc managed to capture a gentleman who had attempted to assist the starving people. Charles was about to hang him for "his insult in passing through the lines of a Prince when he was besieging

a city," when the unfortunate gentleman said that he had a secret to tell.

"Tell it to Campo-Basso," quoth Charles; "he is here."

"It concerns him—he is a traitor to you, Monseigneur."

Campo-Basso laughed, and took his denouncer out and hanged him. A day or two later, Campo-Basso went over to the young Duke René, upon the promise that he would be allowed to retain a place in Lorraine named Commercy, which Charles the Bold had given to him.

A few days after this desertion, with only four thousand men, the Duc de Bourgogne advanced to meet the host of twenty thousand under René, who were well fed and had been well housed during the previous night.

Charles had with his men been compelled to ford a swollen stream in order to take up his position, and his troops were almost frozen when the enemy closed upon him, far overlapping both of his flanks.

When the men of Burgundy now heard the wild sounds of the Alpine horns of Uri and of Unterwalden, which they had heard already so fatally at the battle of Granson, their hearts stood still within them.

The horsemen of Charles, with the Duc at their head, endeavoured to charge the immense masses of the foe. The surface of the snow was, however, all ice, it having frozen after the recent thaw. The horses of the men-at-arms fell in all directions, while the Swiss, with savage shouts, sprang upon their prostrate riders with their spears. The overlapping wings of the enemy, now wheeling in, charged upon the flanks

of the Duc's frozen little force, which broke and fled!

For the third time in six months Charles the Bold was defeated! He was not, however, killed at first, but met his end when retiring with his mounted troops upon a bridge over the Moselle. There the treacherous Campo-Basso had forestalled him, having purposely placed a strong force at the bridge of Bussiére in order to take Charles alive, for his ransom. The people of Nancy, however, had rushed out from the walls, and terrible confusion ensued, as the German-Swiss, blind with the lust of slaughter, killed their friends. The Duc, with a number of his Knights, in this confusion found themselves upon the ice of a pond. He was followed by the men whom Campo-Basso had sent to capture him. The ice broke, and, in the shallow waters, these fell upon Charles, while floundering about with others.

A baker who had come out from Nancy is said to have given the Duc the first blow on the head, and then a mounted gentleman—who was deaf and could not hear when told to hold his hand, and that it was the Duc whom he had before him—drove his lance several times through his body.

Thus, upon Sunday, January 5, 1477, perished Charles the Bold, the indomitable rival of Louis XI. It was not, however, until two days later that his frozen body was found and recognised by his noble page, who belonged to the great Italian House of Colonna. One side of his face had been partly devoured by a wolf, and much of the skin of his face had been torn off when the body was lifted from the ice in which it lay.

René, and the captains with him, having killed Charles the Bold, knelt around his body with lamentations, while having three masses celebrated for his soul. At the same time Duc René caused all of the householders of Nancy to stand around with wax candles in their hands, and the Church of Saint-Georges to be draped with black. It was a polite fiction, quite in accordance with the habits of the day, for René to mourn thus for the man who had robbed him of his Duchy, and the Duke of Lorraine's conduct upon this occasion was supposed to show a token of good-breeding quite worthy of the noble House of Anjou from which he sprung.

Many there were, however, there present who mourned their noble Duc in earnest. These were Olivier de la Marche and other Burgundian prisoners of distinction, whom the Duke of Lorraine politely led in person to breathe a prayer over the remains of their once powerful Seigneur and Suzerain.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Marie flouts Louis and Marries

1477

EVEN after the lapse of centuries, the heart must feel for the sorrows and troubles of that sweet young Princess, Marie de Bourgogne, who was barely twenty years of age when they brought her the news of her father's third defeat and death.

Marie is described by a contemporary as having been of pleasing appearance, graceful, clean-looking, *gente et mignonne*, and to have had a beautiful figure. The greatest heiress in Europe was now, by the death of Charles the Bold, almost in the position of an independent Queen, as Duchesse de Bourgogne et Brabant, Comtesse de Flandre, Comtesse de Hollande, de Franche-Comté, and ruler of half a dozen other Provinces or States. None the less was the orphaned girl practically the prisoner of the people of Ghent, who, at the time that she ascended the Ducal throne, were determined more than ever to keep in their own hands their young Comtesse de Flandre.

While, with only her stepmother, the Princess Margaret of York, to share her tears, Marie ascended the throne which her father had occupied upon his

last state visit to Ghent, she learned at once how half a dozen Princes and Dukes were, upon some pretext or other, each laying claim to some portion of her great dominions. The immense Principality which had been so largely increased by the astuteness of Philippe le Bon and the sword of Charles the Bold was being grabbed at in all directions, the greatest and greediest grabber of all being Marie's own godfather, Louis XI.

While René II., after his victory at Nancy, was invading her Duchy of Burgundy, Marie was informed that Duke Sigismond of Austria and the Swiss laid claim to the County of Burgundy, that is to say, Franche-Comté; that the Count Palatine and the Duke of Bavaria were further asserting their right to Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Hainaut.

Two claimants there were, however, who sought to become possessed at once of the whole of the vast possessions of the young lady who had ascended to such grandeur under such bitter circumstances, hoping to seize all by the simple means of a marriage, if not by force of arms. These were Louis XI., who proposed his eight-year-old son for the hand of this grown-up Princess, and Frederick III., who desired to see her become the wife of his son, Maximilian, a Prince not yet nineteen.

Her stepmother also imagined the idea of giving Marie in marriage to her brother, the Duke of Clarence, now a widower, and thus procuring her heritage for England. Clarence was forty years of age and a drunkard, but his moral character was no worse than that of the gay spark who became later the Emperor Maximilian. This Prince was a noted

to per, one who, according to the spiteful story told of him by Louis XI., would engage in the festive sport of breaking his wine-glass when empty upon his own head or that of one of his guests! An inveterate pursuer of the fair sex, Max is, moreover, celebrated as having been the father of more illegitimate children than any Prince of his day, he being the parent of no less than sixty by the numerous ladies of his choice. The young Austrian Duke was, however, handsome, tall, and strong, skilled in feats of arms, and from his earliest years noted as a hunter in the mountain or the plain. Until the day of his death, in 1519, this stalwart son of a Hapsburg and Princess Eleanor of Portugal, when not engaged in warfare, might be found upon a mountain-crest in pursuit of the chamois, or in the thickest part of the forest fighting on foot against some furiously charging wild boar.

Other *partis* proposed for the hand of Marie were Lord Rivers, the candidate proposed by his sister, Queen Elizabeth of England, and the Duc Adolphe de Gueldre. This latter, having been dispossessed of his dominions by Charles the Bold, was still at this time retained, on the charge of parricide, in a prison at Courtrai. He was the candidate most strongly urged upon Marie by the Flemings, who said that which was chiefly required by their young Comtesse was a man brave enough to defend her in her hour of need, and, quite irrespective of the manner in which for years he had seized and held his father's Duchy, the courage of Adolphe was well known.

Marie was, however, too sad at the moment to

decide upon any of these husbands. From her earliest years she had heard of nothing but of her hand being promised first in one direction and then in another as a political bait, and she would not now hurry. Upon one point she was, however, determined—she would not be married to an eight-year-old French boy—one, moreover, already affianced to a daughter of Edward IV., and the son of the deadliest enemy of her House.

While Marie had at this period one real friend to help to advise her, in the person of Madame de Commines, a connection of the celebrated Philippe, she had no other woman upon whom she could rely. For another of her ladies, a relation of Saint-Pol and of the House of Luxembourg, while pretending to advise the Princess, wrote all of her secrets to the King of France.

The Emperor, had he so chosen, might have given her much help, and, being as keen as he was to make of Marie his daughter-in-law, the wonder is that he did not at once send an army to her assistance. This cowardly Prince contented himself, however, with writing a letter to the King, to say that all of the Burgundian domains should be left intact to the young Duchesse and to his son, when he should make her his bride.

Louis, meanwhile, was acting in the most malignant manner; his perfidy was indeed great towards his orphaned godchild, who had at once written to him a suppliant letter, begging the King for his benevolent assistance in her distress. He had made up his mind to destroy the House of Burgundy to his own advantage, and commenced operations at once.

Having exiled to Poitou Philippe de Commines, who wearied him with unpalatable counsels of moderation, he determined to annex the Somme cities, the County of Artois, Flanders, and both the Burgundies ; and, the better to swindle Marie, he caused the lawyers to declare, contrary to fact, that the fiefs of Burgundy were not transmissible in the female line. Under no circumstances could the King with justice lay claim to Franche-Comté and Hainaut, as they were fiefs of the Empire.

To get rid of those who might interfere with his plans, Louis now paid René de Vaudemont, Sigismond of Austria, and the Swiss. He gave to these latter one hundred thousand florins to leave Franche-Comté alone, while engaging several thousand Swiss also as mercenary troops in his own army.

Before even the body of Charles the Bold had been recognised, on January 7, 1477, Louis engaged the Prince of Orange, whose Principality in France he had formerly annexed, to head his armies and invade and capture Burgundy. Although the Prince of Orange, Jean de Chalon by name, was himself a Burgundian, he accepted this task. To aid him in the command, the King appointed the Sire de Craon to assist in despoiling Marie. At the same time, in both the Burgundies, Louis hypocritically gave out that he was simply sending troops to occupy those countries, in order to hold them for his god-child, of whom he represented himself as having "the noble charge."

These proclamations did their work at first, but the prayers of the young Princess to the loyalty of her subjects soon caused those who had at first

submitted to rise in arms on her behalf. Jean de Chalon, who had been deceived by Louis, came over to the side of his lawful mistress in Burgundy, and headed the resistance. While Louis captured and put into an iron cage at Tours a brave Burgundian named Simon de Quingey, his fury was great against the Prince of Orange. He called him "Judas, the man of the thirty pieces of silver," and ordered his captain, la Trémouille, to suspend him by his heels and burn him alive with his head in the fire!

Fortunately for himself, Orange was able to retain his liberty during the course of the war, which lasted four years in Franche-Comté. Louis, therefore, caused pictures of Jean de Chalon hanging with his heels in the air to be hung up in various parts of the invaded territories.

The Duchy of Burgundy was reduced far sooner than the County, but, in spite of all the presents and hypocritical messages sent by the King to the people of Ghent, Flanders would not consent quietly to walk into the parlour of this Universal Spider.

He had taken Picardy and the County of Boulogne, which formed a good buffer against the English at Calais; but he, more dearly than anything else, desired the possession of Marie's city of Arras, in the County of Artois; and Arras he could not get. It was a most important city, lying between Flanders and Calais, and formerly, before the defeat of the people of Ghent at Gavre and the deprivation of their privileges, it had been subject to Ghent. These privileges they now reaffirmed. The people of Flanders, while caring little about what became of the other French Provinces of Burgundy, still clung on



CHARLES VIII

to Artois ; the war-cry of the Flemings still remained that which it had been for hundreds of years—" Arras ! Arras !" Louis at this time had established his headquarters at Péronne, the city of his former humiliation and imprisonment. At Péronne he now laboured in return for the humiliation of Burgundy, opening a regular market in which to purchase the fidelity of the servitors of the young Marie de Bourgogne.

Among those Burgundians with whom he had made acquaintance and bribed at the time of his imprisonment by Charles the Bold, had been Philippe de Crèvecœur, Sire d'Esquerdes. This able noble had been in a manner the foster-brother of Made-moiselle de Bourgogne, as Marie had been brought up by his mother. He was now the Governor of Picardy and the Somme cities, including Arras, and his fidelity suspected neither by the Princess nor by the men of Ghent. Nor for a time could Louis by any means prevail upon Crèvecœur to allow him with his troops to occupy even the so-called " city " of Arras, the unwall'd portion, belonging to the Bishop, of which the King claimed the Suzerain feudal rights.

Unfortunately, in the Council of State of Marie were two Frenchmen, her Chancellor Hugonet and the Sire d'Humbercourt, of whom we have heard previously at the taking of Liége. These were sent by the young Duchesse as Ambassadors to Louis, to endeavour to persuade him to stay hostilities. Humbercourt was already hated, on account of Liége, and the Wild Boar of the Ardennes, with young Saint-Pol, had both come to Ghent to ask for his death. Hugonet was also detested, as Charles the

Bold had been wont to use him as the means of squeezing money out of the Flemings. When these two Seigneurs arrived at Péronne, Louis wheedled and made much of them. Reminding them that they had been born in Picardy and Burgundy, and spoke French like himself, that they had also lands in France, the King vowed that he loved them, and begged them to come and make their homes in his country.

The result of this coaxing, added to certain occult references to possible monetary advantages, proved fatal to Arras. For whereas Crèvecœur had boldly hitherto maintained that only by a command sealed with the Ducal Seal of his mistress could he yield the "city" of Arras, there was now no more trouble. Marie's Chancellor had the seal with him; he and Humbercourt were of her Council. They gave to Crèvecœur the necessary authority, Louis with his troops entered the city of Arras—and then the rest (March 4, 1477).

Ghent, which had been already raging, went wild when it heard of the loss of the cherished Arras! The people rose in arms and cut off the heads of several of the leading Magistrates and town officials. The King, however, was heard to be advancing into Flanders, whereupon a new Embassy was sent to meet him.

The States-General of Flanders and Brabant had recently assembled, to which the King had sent as a herald his favourite, the barber Olivier le Daim, commonly called Oliver the Devil. Through this myrmidon Louis had assured the States-General that his dearest wish was the marriage of their new

ruler with the Dauphin, and vowing that he would "take the Crown off his own head and place it on the head of his said son and the said 'damoiselle,' and himself retire to some place to live in private life." Marie, it may be mentioned, being as she was quite unprotected among the more than half-rebellious Flemings, had been compelled to promise that she would take no steps without the advice of the said States.

When the new Embassy from Ghent called the attention of the King to the fact that his actions were not in accordance with his words, he played a mean trick upon Marie, who, in her fear of her terrible godfather, had sent him a private letter. It was a trick which was to cost two heads. The King assured the deputies that he had done nothing against the will of their mistress, and that they had no right, therefore, to complain. "But," they replied, "our Sovereign has vowed only to be guided by the counsel of the States."

"I can prove the contrary," replied Louis. "Look at this!" He gave them a letter, written by three persons, which Hugonet and Humbercourt had delivered to him. These three persons were Marie, her stepmother the Duchess Margaret of York, and the brother of the Duke of Clèves, who was one of the few members of Marie's private Council of State.

Crestfallen and furious, the members of the Embassy returned to Ghent and requested an audience of their Sovereign. When Marie received them in solemn state, they told her that they were sorry to hear that she had informed the King by letter that she intended only to be guided by the advice of the two persons that she had sent to him.

"There was no such letter ever written," replied Marie, lying.

"Will you please to look at this," they replied, and handed up to her the missive.

Marie was dumbfounded and crushed with shame. She behaved, however, nobly, risking her own life unattended among the furious crowds of armed citizens, to beg for the lives of Hugonet and Humbercourt. When, dressed in the plain mourning dress of a citizen's daughter, with a Flemish cap upon her head, the Sovereign of the Burgundies implored mercy for the men whose accomplices she was proved to have been, many were gained by her emotion.

The two parties, for and against the young Comtesse de Flandre, took up arms and fought. Those for the death of Humbercourt and Hugonet gained, however, the advantage, and they were tried and sentenced to die.

The two nobles were first tortured, and then, before their execution, the judges proceeded to their Sovereign in a body to inform her of their confessions. In these they had stated that they had acted by authority and had received money, but not as a bribe, merely as a present from Louis, and only after the delivery of Arras to the King. Marie, in tears, again begging for mercy, the hard-hearted Flemish judges reminded her roughly that, as their Sovereign, it was her duty to see justice done on rich and poor alike.

The Sire d'Humbercourt and the Chancellor Hugonet, with legs all dislocated, were driven, seated in chairs, to their execution. On account of his

high rank, and belonging to the Order of the Golden Fleece, the former was seated in an arm-chair, while, to do more honour to him at the moment of his death, the scaffold was draped with black.

When the two Seigneurs had been beheaded sitting in their chairs, a hundred men in mourning bore off the body of the Sire d'Humbercourt, while fifty others performed the same duty for the Chancellor's remains.

The vengeance of the Flemings had been accomplished on April 3, 1477, and not long afterwards the question of Marie's marriage came again, and prominently, before her, by the arrival of an Embassy at Brussels from the Duke Maximilian. This Embassy, in spite of the endeavours of the Duke of Clèves to prevent its arrival, Marie de Bourgogne resolved to receive. There was no longer any question in the minds of the Flemings or of Marie of any marriage with the Dauphin. Such Flemish sympathy as Louis might have originally won by his specious messages delivered by the barber Olivier le Daim was lost by his action concerning Arras, and his name detested throughout the Low Countries, which, moreover, remembered his action at the destruction of Liége. The King, from Artois had passed into Hainaut, and was meeting with resistance everywhere, although giving out that he was coming merely as a friend—as a father-in-law. He had just taken Avesnes, killed every one, and burned it to the ground—the Low Countries would have none of such a father-in-law!

Marie, aided by her friend, Madame de Commines, had, however, made up her mind to hoodwink the

Duke of Clèves and also those who favoured the English marriages. She was alone, her stepmother having been sent away from her, and pretended that she would just receive the Imperial envoys to hear what they had got to say about Maximilian and his good qualities.

They were introduced before the young Sovereign, and deferentially reminded her of the fact that, by her late father's wish, she had in the previous year sent a diamond ring to Maximilian. The Duke of Clèves and the Flemish nobles present then expected to hear their mistress reply that what had been done by Charles the Bold did not concern her. What was their astonishment, therefore, to hear Marie exclaim, primly but courteously: "I acknowledge having sent the diamond ring, and I accept the Duke Maximilian for my husband."

That same evening Marie caused a public dinner to be given to the Imperial envoys. She caused proclamation to be made in Ghent that she intended to marry the son of the Emperor, and the young Princess honoured the banquet with her presence.

By Olivier le Daim the barber, who was now honoured by the King with the title of Comte de Meulan, Louis sent remonstrances to Marie, saying that, as his vassal, according to the terms of feudal right, she could not marry without the permission of her Suzerain. He also attacked the Flemish militia, and, after burning the town of Cassel, followed them to within twelve miles of Ghent. Marie, however, snapped her fingers at Louis and his feudal rights, and married Maximilian, who arrived in state with many German Princes at Ghent, on August 19, 1477.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Triumphant End of Louis XI

1483

THE six years following the marriage of Marie de Bourgogne, until the death of that unlucky Princess by a fall from her horse in 1483, have left behind them little but a record of wars, violences, and outrages, terminating in the triumphant end of Louis XI. By her husband Marie was beloved, and she bore to him two children—a boy, Philippe, who was to become the father of the great Emperor Charles V., and a girl, Marguerite. This latter, after having been brought up in France as the child-wife of Charles VIII., was disavowed in favour of Anne of Brittany. She then married, in succession, the heir to the Crown of Spain and a Duke of Savoy, and became famous for the diplomatic powers which she displayed, to the detriment of France, in her position as Regent of the Low Countries for her nephew Charles V.

Maximilian, during Marie's lifetime, was constantly at war with Louis XI. in the defence of his wife's dominions ; at war also against the people of Gueldre. These, aided by the North German Princes, drove the Burgundians out and reinstated the infant

son of the Duc Adolphe de Gueldre upon the Ducal throne, which had been seized by Charles the Bold.

While Louis in the end remained in possession of all of the French possessions of his godchild—Burgundy, Franche-Comté, and Artois—Maximilian gained a considerable victory over the French near Théroutenne two years after his marriage. Louis, becoming more and more suspicious as he grew older, imagined plots and treasons in all directions. Especially he suspected his captains of being in secret intelligence with the enemy. He accordingly not only roughly disbanded twelve thousand men of his well-disciplined *Compagnies d'Ordonnance*, but imprisoned and cut off the heads of some of the officers. Their sole crime was that of being too faithful to Antoine de Chabannes, Comte de Dammartin, whom the King not only suspected but feared. He removed this able old General from the chief command of the army, but was too much afraid of him to do so without giving him another very high appointment, that of the King's Lieutenant for Paris and the Isle of France.

The old *écorcheur* felt his removal from the command greatly, but he had his revenge when Louis replaced him at the head of the army by the Burgundian deserter, Philippe de Crèveœur. Owing to the blunders made by Crèveœur, when he found himself opposed at Guinegate, near Théroutenne, to his old comrades in arms under Marie's husband, he underwent a serious defeat.

The Grands Seigneurs of the Low Countries, who were loudly crying out for the degradation of Crèveœur from the Golden Fleece, had the satisfaction

of putting his forces so utterly to the rout that they called the bloody contest by the name of the Battle of the Spurs. The losses of Maximilian were, however, likewise very great, although he remained in triumph the master of the field.

After this battle the troubles of Marie were aggravated by a war made by Gueldre upon Holland, and also by a civil war among the Dutch themselves. Taking advantage of these disturbances, Louis contrived to carry off the whole of the Dutch herring-fleet, and one bringing them grain from Prussia. Louis failed, however, in taking various towns which were the personal property of Margaret of York, the Dowager Duchesse de Bourgogne.

Although Edward IV. was not going to give up his yearly pension from Louis to go to war with France, he listened to his sister's prayers so far as to allow Lord Hastings to help her with archers from Calais, with the result that the King was repulsed from before Oudenarde.

Louis now thought he had gone far enough in the north, with the result that he abandoned the Imperial town of Cambrai, while jokingly informing the inhabitants that, if they liked, they could "stick up their bird" (the Austrian Eagle) again in the place of his fleurs-de-lys. He added that they might please themselves by imagining that the bird had only been away for a holiday flight, and had returned, like the swallows, in spring.

While Maximilian had become very unpopular with the Flemings, and also so ill as almost to leave his young wife a widow, all, on the other hand, now went well with Louis XI.

He bribed Lord Hastings to remain quietly at Calais, and to spoil his plans no longer; he bought over the Swiss, who had made a treaty of peace with Maximilian and Marie; he even made himself a citizen of Berne. He sent his army to pillage Marie's Duchy of Luxembourg at their leisure; he flattered and consoled the people of the Duchy of Burgundy, of which he had despoiled his godchild, while making a bridge of gold by which the Burgundian nobles could come over to him. The better to prove to the people of Burgundy that he was one with themselves, the King even took from among them a great lady of Dijon to make of her his mistress.

This final act of immorality can, however, have had little but political signification, for Louis' health was now very bad; he was, in fact, rapidly going downhill. Ill or no, he had obtained his heart's desire, the wish of his lifetime!

In spite of his devotion to his Saints, he had some time previously written, concerning the taking of Burgundy, to the commander of his forces: "I have no other Paradise in my imagination than that!" There was, however, one other wish of the King's heart, one but little less ardent than the breaking up of the Burgundian dominions to his own advantage. This was to get hold of the Duchy of Brittany, by war or fraud, it mattered little how. Duc François II. had only one girl as his heiress, and nothing seemed more improbable than that he would ever give her to the Dauphin. Louis accordingly, as a pretext for succeeding to Brittany, bought up the rights to the Duchy of the House of Blois.

These rights had long ago been declared invalid ; they would, none the less, prove very useful in the hands of Louis XI. The better to aid his schemes, during his later years Louis did all in his power, by money and favour, to draw the great Breton nobles to himself. In this way he attracted Tanneguy Duchâtel, Pierre de Rohan, and the Comte Gui de Laval, the father of King René's second wife.

Placing these nobles in his armies and giving them grand posts, Louis had already his foot well advanced over the Breton border-line. Although such a schemer, Louis was no craven in battle, although he himself said that he exposed his person all the more freely in various sieges merely because he wished to prove to François II. that he lied in calling him coward. Upon one of these occasions, in attempting to storm the walls of a city, Louis was recognised, aimed at, and wounded, while Tanneguy Duchâtel was killed by his side. The King then wrote a letter, in which he said that he owed his wound to the insulting words of the Duc de Bretagne.

He was not to live to see the annexation of the Duchy to France, in spite of all his schemes. That was to be accomplished later by the ability of his daughter, Anne de Beaujeu, who sent Marguerite, the daughter of Marie de Bourgogne, back to Flanders, while terrifying the fourteen-year-old Anne of Brittany into accepting the hand of her young brother, Charles VIII. The accomplishment of this work of ambition was, however, then made all the easier for the daughter of Louis XI. by the manner in which Louis had paved the way to Brittany in his lifetime.

While François II. still lived there could be nothing done in the way of marriage treaties with Brittany, between whose ruler and that of France there was naught but continued enmity. Louis, therefore, turned to Flanders once more in friendly guise, after having shown the length of his arm by what took place at Liége. The King mistrusted all of the Bourbon race, not even excepting his son-in-law, Pierre de Beaujeu. After he had dispossessed Charles, Cardinal de Bourbon, of his Archbishopric of Lyon, he allowed La Marck, the Wild Boar of the Ardennes, to recruit soldiers in France, even in Paris. With these the Wild Boar went to attack Liége, and this time the Bishop, Louis de Bourbon, was very effectually killed !

When Louis, whose subjects were wearied with the excessive taxation and the pillage of the coasts by the war-ships of the Low Countries, seemed ready to end the Burgundian war, his opponents were no less ready to listen to him.

Marie de Bourgogne, it was said, need not have died as the effects of her horse falling with her, had not her excessive modesty prevented the surgeons from making an examination. When the young Princess was, however, no more, the Flemings of Ghent removed the control of her two children and heirs from Maximilian, allowing him only to remain one of their trustees, with other trustees appointed by Flanders and Brabant. Of these States and Holland they declared the infant Duc Philippe to be ruler ; but, for the sake of future peace and quiet, the Flemings were anxious to be rid of any further connection with the French Provinces of Burgundy.

While sending large presents of money to Maximilian, Louis now asked the Low Countries for a peace, to be cemented by the marriage of the young Marguerite to the Dauphin Charles. His offers were readily listened to. The little Princess was to take with her, as her dowry to France, Artois and Franche-Comté, about which there need be no more fighting. "By all means," said the Flemings, "for thus in future our Comtes will no longer be able to overawe us with their hordes of French cavaliers when in need of money."

The negotiations were brought to a successful end by Philippe de Crèveœur, acting on behalf of the King, and the Peace of Arras, which was signed on December 23, 1482, may be said to have been the crowning act of policy of the lifetime of Louis XI. In it nothing whatever was said about the cession of Burgundy, which remained in the hands of the King, while his troops already occupied the Provinces which were to form the dowry of the little girl who was carried off to Paris.

All continued thus to go well with Louis XI., only he happened to be dying gradually, and to be aware of that fact. He kept up, however, his marvellous energy and activity to the end, while shut up in the sort of prison which he had made for himself in his strong castle of Plessis-les-Tours, a citadel which was surrounded with concealed man-traps and horrid spikes, and almost impossible of approach. But few persons were here allowed to share his retreat, and those chiefly of low origin, the most favoured and trusted being Philippe de Commines, Seigneur d'Argenton, who shared the King's bedroom.

In order that people should not believe the reports that Louis was dead, he was towards his end more active than ever in causing the punishment, by death or imprisonment, of those at a distance against whom he had any grudge. As particular examples of cruelty may be mentioned his beheading of twenty-two burghers of Arras, who were caught going on a mission to Marie de Bourgogne, and his subsequently turning the whole of the inhabitants out of that city to starve. Concerning the head of Maître Oudart de Bussy, the leader of the twenty-two, Louis wrote as follows: "In order that his head may be well recognised, I have had it decorated with a fine furred hood, and it is over the market of Hesdin, where he presides!"

When the King found that his ailments prevented him from continuing to proceed abroad to the sports of the chase, he still delighted in hunting rats and mice within the purlicus of Plessis-les-Tours, with little dogs which he had trained for the purpose. Ever on the alert at this place against treachery, for he suspected even his own daughter Anne and her husband, he would occasionally get up in the middle of the night and prowling round alone, or with Commynes. Upon one of these occasions, very early in the morning, Louis XI. found himself in the kitchens of the great and sombre castle. There he found no one but a boy turning a spit.

The King, who was as usual very shabbily dressed, approaching this lad, inquired of him, "How much do you earn?"

"As much as the King," replied the lad saucily to the meanly dressed prowler, whom he had never before seen.

"And what does the King earn?" returned the curious Louis.

"His living—and I mine," snapped back the urchin and, turning his back upon the beggarly man, whose looks he mistrusted, went on with his work.

Although Louis was warned by a stroke of paralysis, he went on "earning his living" in the usual way, and even, when better, went out to review an immense new army armed in the Swiss style, which he had raised for the chastisement of the Duke of Brittany.

In order to defeat the trickeries of the lawyers, whom he detested, the King was planning an uniform scale of weights and measures for the whole Kingdom, when he had a second stroke of some kind, from which he again recovered. He then punished all those who had not allowed him to approach or to open a window upon his first feeling ill.

Louis now accepted the warning, and although determined, if possible, to live, and having recourse to priests and hermits of all kinds to pray for his life, went, when strong enough, to pay a visit to his young son, whom he kept as a sort of prisoner at Amboise.

To the youthful Charles the dying man spoke many words of wisdom, the advice of a statesman rather than of a father, particularly recommending him to pay attention to the counsels of the Princes of his own blood, to Crèveœur, and to Olivier le Daim.

As a father the trembling lad can indeed scarcely have looked upon this terrible King, whom he had but rarely seen, and of whom common report

had it that he drank the blood of infants in order to regain his health. Charles understood, however, enough to know that his father meant to advise him strongly to listen to the counsels of his elder sister Anne, and her husband Beaujeu, when speaking of the Princes of his own Blood; and this advice the lad subsequently followed, to his advantage.

One of the last actions of Louis XI. was to order his Chancellor to administer a severe dressing-down and "to do justice to" the Archbishop of Paris, who had thought the moment of the King's dangerous illness propitious for suggesting that he should make amends for many of his actions against the Bishops.

Having then arranged for his burial, without any state, at the Church of Nôtre-Dame de Cléry, Louis caused himself to be anointed with the *Sainte ampoule*, the holy oil used at Reims for the consecration of the Kings of France at their coronation. The holy oil proving, however, of no use as a remedy, Louis sent the Seals of State to his son, and, while talking volubly and sensibly, and mixing up political instructions with prayers, died suddenly August 30, 1483, leaving a new and consolidated France behind him.

THE END

